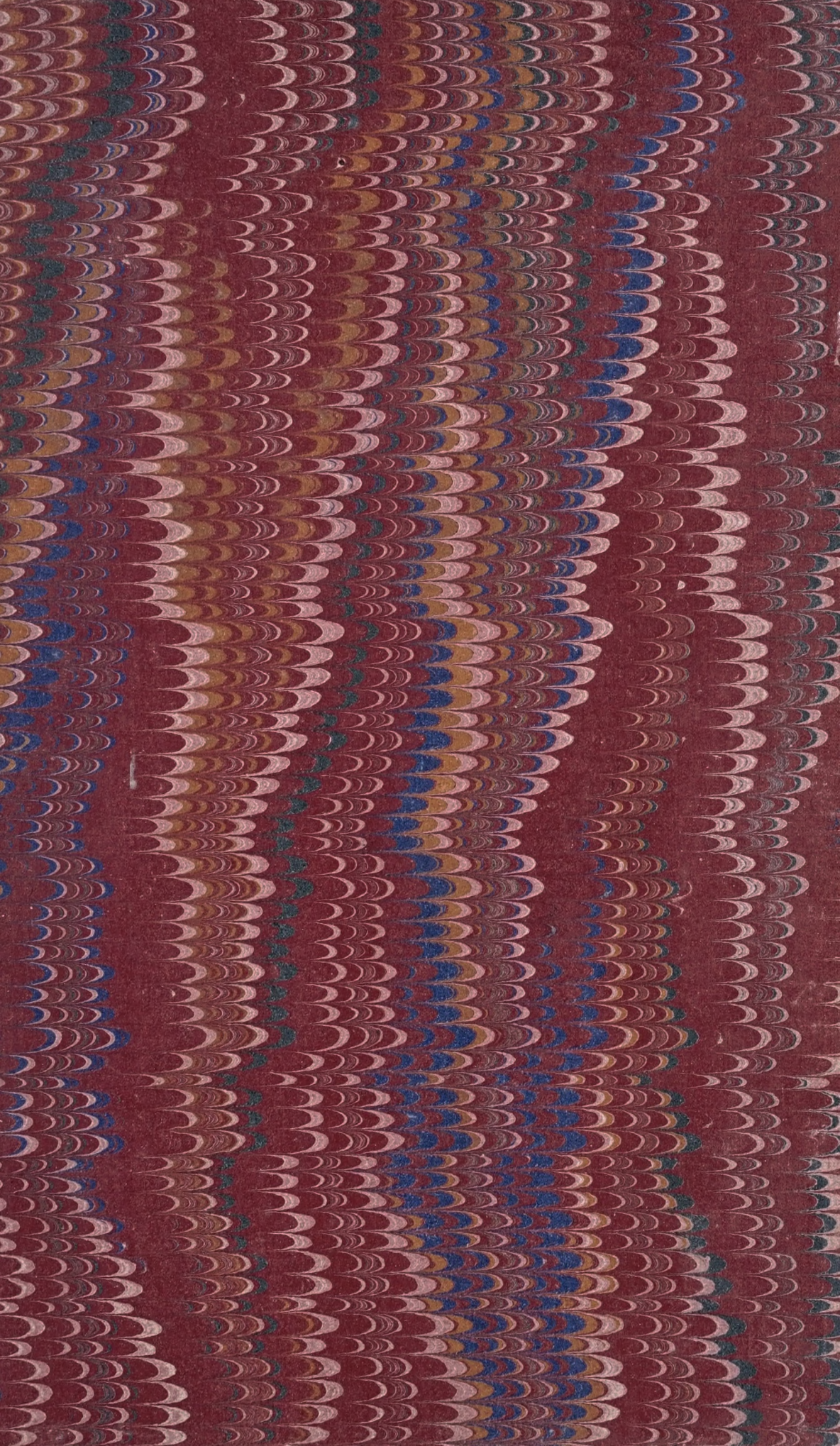


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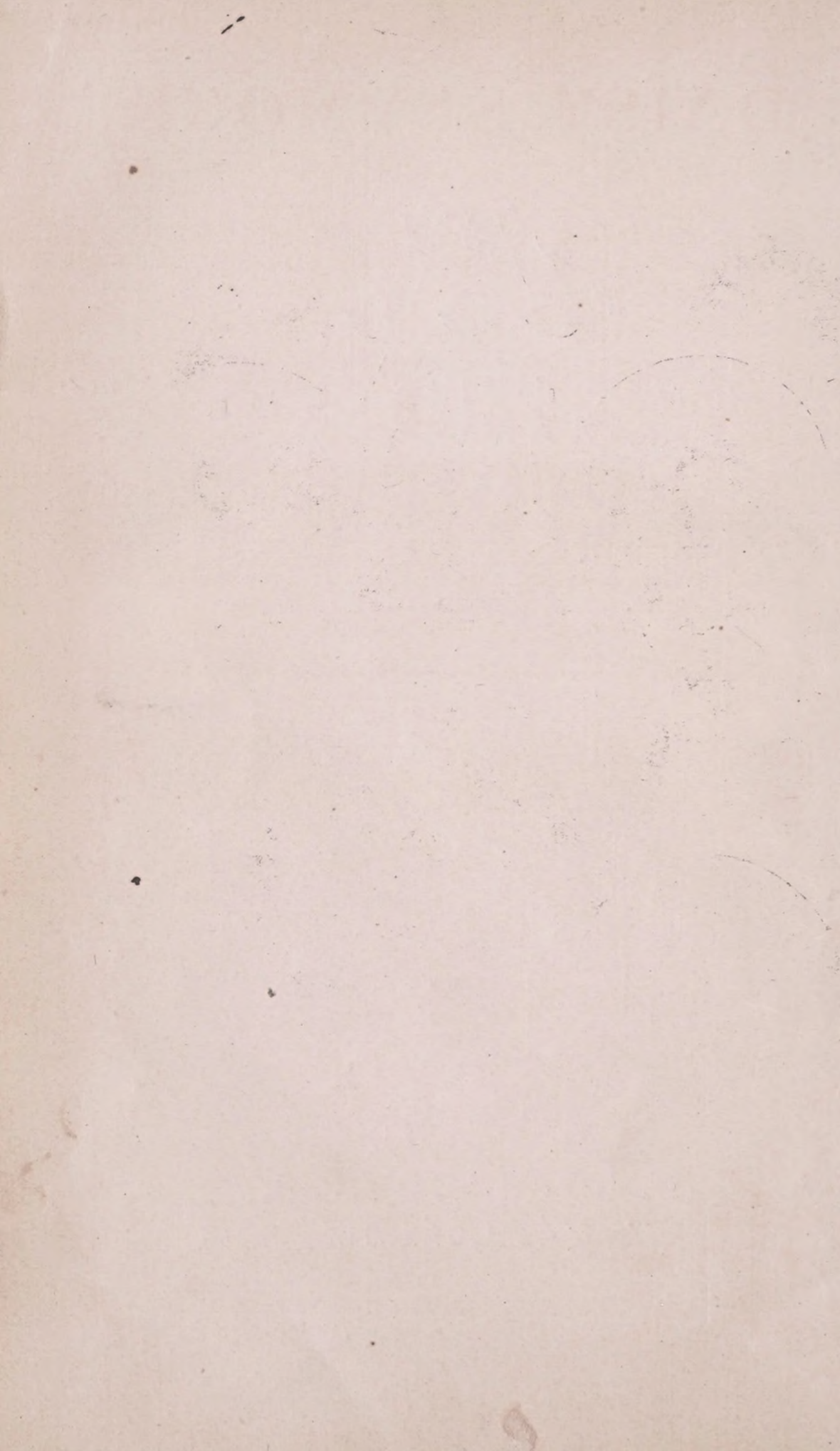
The girls were preparing for their afternoon walk and Daisy stood at the glass.
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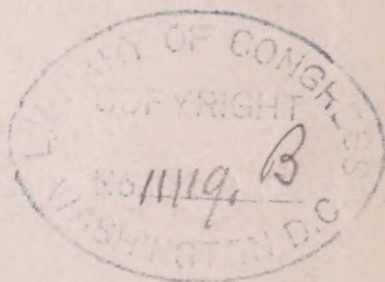


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DAISY SEYMOUR.

By L. A. F.



Boston :

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1871.

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DAISY SEYMOUR.

CHAPTER I.

THE PIC - NIC.

DAISY sat in the school - room, writing a French exercise. It seemed to Daisy as if she were always writing French exercises. Now it was a French verb, then copying the dictation lesson, then a French letter, and then something else, till, between Monsieur Camolet and Madame Lolotte, her Botany and English Literature would

have had a poor chance, had not her sensible teacher taught botany in the fields and woods, and her own taste and extensive reading made the old poets a delight to her.

Daisy was tired of French that morning. She did think to herself,—“Monsieur Camolet is particular and cross,” though she felt a slight twinge for saying so, even to herself; but the birds were singing so gaily, the morning hour was so sweet with the breath of flowers, and the shaded lawn upon which the school-room opened looked such an Eden of beauty, that her fancy would drift away from French idioms.

“With good will, doing service.” “Do all things without murmurings and disputings,” she said softly, as she recalled her Bible verses for the morning. “That means, all work must be done in a good spirit. Even hand labor can become temple service, drudgery be glorified, and the dullest task alive with a spiritual presence. So Mrs. Lawrence told us. I wonder if I can put

a soul into the 'negative - interrogative.'" And Daisy tried to go on with her writing.

"Do sit still, Mary!" Mary Morris was fidgeting at her elbow in busy idleness. Mary could always keep more busy in nothing than in something. "Have you written your French?"

"No; a little bird prophesied to me that we are going to the woods to-day, and I would not for the world taste any study."

"Going into the woods!" "Won't that be splendid!" came from a dozen mouths at once, as the bent heads sprang up from the pressure of lessons, like flowers from the weight of rain-drops.

"How do you know, Mary?" And they toss books aside, and buzz about in eager anticipation.

"Oh, I saw Madame and Mrs. Lawrence in close council, and heard part of a message to the cook about 'lunch,' and another to Pete about 'safe horses' and 'all day,' and such like interest-

ing fragments, which, put together, mean that we study nothing but botany to-day, just as sure as that two and two make four. And here comes Madame."

"Ah, mes poulettes! What for you study now. Run away for your hats and your baskets. Mrs. Lawrence says to tell you we go to a pic-nic at Ellis's Mills. Off to the woods!" And Madame Lolotte waves her handkerchief and dances about the room, caroling a Swiss mountain song, as blithe and buoyant as the gayest maiden among them, though she carried in her heart the graves of husband and children, and American ways were as foreign to her habits as its language to her tongue.

So there was rejoicing in Mrs. Lawrence's school-room, repeated as the day scholars gathered at nine o'clock, and Mrs. Lawrence announced the arrangements for a pic-nic for the school, with directions for overshoes and extra shawls, text-books on botany, tin boxes and

baskets for flowers, &c., &c. And then there was hurrying, and clattering, and planning for individual comforts and resources for the day. Private stores of oranges and pea - nuts were to be packed in flower baskets, thick gloves to be mended, missing buttons to be restored to leather boots, consultations, "if this sacque would do," "how this large hat looks," and "if it will do to wear the black and red suit," &c. Girlish taste has an eye for beauty, whatever the dress, and the graceful figures and fresh young faces have such a knack of adaptation to circumstances, that the unique garments and oddly assorted suits look like picturesque costume donned for the occasion.

At last they were off, teachers and scholars, little Charlie, the child of the house, and Pete the Irish boy, who was to look after the lunch baskets and serve as body - guard in any emergency. The morning was fine, the vehicle comfortable and roomy, the horses in good spirits, and the

driver careful and good-natured ; and they rode on with as much buoyant gladness and eager anticipation as a party of frolicsome people, half intoxicated with "merry madness," could hold in their heads and hearts. They halted at every meadow, swamp or wood where there was a possibility for flowers ; and even the driver, catching their botanical enthusiasm, would fasten the horses and himself plunge through thicket and morass to hunt for ladies' slipper or painted-cup. How they went over shoes in the reedy mire, venturing after water-lilies, or down in boggy depths after meadow blossoms ! How veils were rent in the thickets, and dresses torn on the under-brush ! How eager the race of the swift-footed after field blossoms which the keen eye discovered from afar ! How ringing the laughter of those whose fearless agility made the five-barred board fence a light gymnastic feat, over the timid and awkward who were afraid of the brook on one side and bramble bushes on the other, and were

utterly befogged as to the way of getting up to the topmost bar and getting down again on the opposite side ! How little vanities, caprices and selfishness showed themselves here and there in a *naïve* transparency ! How others never lost their sweetness, gentleness and thoughtful courtesy under the most exuberant spirits !

“ With good will, doing service,” came into Daisy’s thoughts even in her wildest glee, making her eye quick, her hand helpful and her tongue ready in deeds and words of kindness. But not always without an effort. She did want that beautiful orchid which she gave up to Nellie Stearns, when a treacherous moss hillock left the latter halting in the race. Her arm did ache carrying the large box of specimens across the meadow. She did enjoy that comfortable seat which she offered to tired Lucy. And when she sat mending careless Helen’s dress, she would have liked better the fun and frolic when the girls were decking the long omnibus with oak branches.

The little self - denials, the little moralities of social intercourse, cost something. So Daisy found, for she was not an angel; only an affectionate, fresh - hearted school - girl, immature and faulty, but earnest in purpose, sincere in effort to grow wiser and worthier. She had just begun to see how all that was valuable in her must be rooted and grounded in her love for her Saviour if it would stand against temptation and trial; and in her simple, earnest way, she was trying to lift her daily life up from its low level of natural amiabilities and kind impulses into a Christian atmosphere with Christian graces. And who does not know how inveterate and troublesome faults seem to grow when we watch against them and strive to correct them? As long as our eyes were shut to them, they gave us little concern. Thus, while the teachers remarked that Daisy Seymour was developing and improving every day, she felt ashamed and grieved over her shortcomings. But to - day there was little mourning

over faults ; only a quickened remembrance of others' happiness, a deeper and richer fullness of joy in her exuberant spirits, a softening and tempering of her careless glee by an unselfish thoughtfulness for those about her.

They had their pic-nic dinner on the wooded bank of a lively little river, that, after being held up by a dam to work in a flour mill, came bounding and racing over the rocks in a wild outburst of freedom and joyousness,—now leaping down in foaming cataracts, then laughing and dimpling in a thousand eddies where the sunshine played and lost itself. How the girls frolicked after dinner, and then rambled up and down the bank, finding new treasures in minerals and flowers, explored ravines and mossy dells, investigated the machinery of the mill, weighed themselves on the scales, made acquaintance with the children in the neighboring cottage, the chickens, the geese and the lambs, or, seated in shaded nooks, told stories to each other, or reveled in poetic dreams

on the roots of a giant tree that stretched over the river where it made a bold leap over the rocks with a roaring and rushing, and then came up in foam and mist. It was easy to fancy that they themselves were bounding over with the river, down into the whirling, foaming depths, up into the sunshine and spray, and out into the gladsome current beyond. Who knows how many bright ideas and pleasant fancies were suggested here and saved for their next compositions?—how many sank down softly and deep into their hearts and memories, to come up in some far-off future, like the picture of a saint clothed in a halo of golden light?

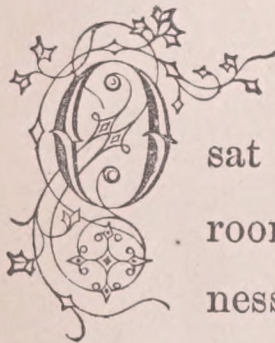
They came home in the late sunset, embowered in leaves and flowers, laden with treasures from the woods, and satisfied that the day had been all they had anticipated. Out on the country roads they made the air ring with their songs, then gradually dropped into softer music, then their lively voices and pealing laughter fell into

lower tones and rippling trills or airy bubbles of glee, as the wheels rattled upon the pavements, and their wild spirits had subsided into hushed household gentleness as they drove up to the door in the fading golden twilight.



CHAPTER II.

THE SUDDEN TEMPTATION.



IN THE following morning Daisy sat again at her desk in the school-room, but the morning had no brightness. She scribbled on the margin of her exercise book: "Yesterday was one of June's perfect days, as full of sparkling effervescence as if the wine of life were just uncorked; to-day is rainy, cold and dreary, as if a part of the foaming goblet, left unquaffed while its sweetness and sparkle were fresh in it, had been saved over, stale and insipid, for our meager fare to-day." Daisy was apt to put a plain fact into a fanciful dress. The truth was, she slept so soundly and late

after the fatigues and excitements of yesterday, that she was behindhand in her work, had a head - ache and felt cross. Then the morning was rainy, and everything and everybody looked disagreeable to her. The uneasy, idle Mary Morris only ruffled her yesterday ; to - day she exasperated her.

" Mary, if you won't sit still and study yourself, do n't hinder your neighbor. I wish somebody would nail you to one place, so that I could have a little peace."

" Perhaps you would like to be the hammer ;" and Mary saucily dropped her head between Daisy's face and book. How could Daisy help snapping the pink ear and twitching the short curls? The snap and the twitch may have been a little harder than she meant. At any rate, Mary's quick rebound under the playful infliction overturned the inkstand upon the desk, Daisy's French exercise, dress, down upon the carpet. This was a grievous calamity. To spill ink was

unpardonable under Mrs. Lawrence's rule. The girls were expected to do their writing in the school-room, and covered inkstands were fitted into their desks, so that there was little excuse for any accident. Daisy preferred a fancy ink, and had brought her own inkstand. Poor Daisy! She lost her temper, her time, her lesson and her dress. With the annoyance of the accident, the reproof of her teacher, her own self-blame, and the serio-comic commiseration of the girls, she took her seat at the commencement of school, mortified, grieved and vexed. Everything went wrong all the morning, but she shut her mouth firmly, swallowed hard, and with subdued resoluteness tried to be brave and patient. — "Ah, Daisy, the big ears will show!" "vos oreilles vous trahissent!"

The girls were preparing for their afternoon walk, and Daisy stood at the glass giving some finishing touches to her curls as they floated out loosely under her hat. She was not noticeably

vain. She did not think she was vain at all;—only complacently glad that people were pleased with her personal appearance, though “really she would rather have Carrie Willis’s strongly marked features and striking manners, than her own pink and white face. There was a chance to put so much into Carrie’s face, and her style could become so distinguè, while her own apple-blossom prettiness would always be tame and ordinary.” But if she was only glad when people admired her, she was not simply sorry over her personal defects. Her large, homely ears were a great mortification to her; “such a mistake in the type of her physique,” as she used to say. “Her fair skin, blue eyes and golden hair, had a right to delicate ears.” She felt as if nature had wronged her, so her ears did not harmonize with her temper any more than with her style of beauty; and, since the fashion of arranging the hair exposed the ears so much, she was accustomed to dispose of her waving, curling locks with various coquettish devices to conceal

these objectionable appendages to her otherwise symmetrical head. Of course, the girls used to tease her about it. Ordinarily she concealed her sensitiveness and laughed good-naturedly with them, meeting their bantering and criticisms with the same equanimity as she did their flatteries; for, whatever may be true of women, school-girls do admire each other, and if such admiration is not as intoxicating, it is quite as genuine in expression, as that which meets them in society.

To-day, Daisy had her nerves on the outside, and Abby's teasing remark and mischievous quotation from the fable that had given them so much merriment as well as moralizing in the class, made her blue eyes flash and her cheeks grow hot; and, with a withering look at the plain, deformed girl, her quick tongue answered,—"If I were a hunch-back, I would not make fun of other people's little imperfections."

It did not need Abby's burst of tears, nor the

quick exclamations, "For shame, Daisy!" "How could you!" "How cruel!" to make Daisy hide her face in shame and remorse. They all loved Abby, and, with genuine delicacy and consideration, rarely reminded her of her deformity, even in their most thoughtless fun. Daisy's cruel words came out so suddenly that they seemed to utter themselves. They were as unexpected and shocking to herself as to the others. "How could I!" she exclaimed, flinging her arms about the weeping girl, and making all the apology she could; but the rude speech could not be taken back. Spoken words can not be unsaid.

Madame's gay call: "Depechez - vous! mes petites! mes poulettes! Depechez - vous! Pourquoi ne vous depechez - vous pas?" put an end to the scene.

Fortunately, or perhaps considerately, for she had a faculty for doing the right thing in apparent ignorance of its opportuneness, Mrs. Lawrence sent in to ask Abby if she would ride

over to the greenhouse for her, and order the flowers for reception." The carriage was at the door, and she found it impossible to go herself, as she proposed. And if Daisy and Mary did not mind giving up their walk, would they stay and help her pack the missionary box which was to be sent off the next morning?

Abby dried her tears for the ride, and Daisy and Mary brought out the garments which their deft fingers had made for the western household, and silently folded and arranged the articles till Mrs. Lawrence joined them, and, with her genial, sympathetic, helpful presence, restored the brightness of their faces somewhat, without appearing to notice that it had been clouded.

The day wore on to its close. Daisy felt too humbled and discouraged over her failures, mishaps and faults to join the lively chat of the girls after evening study hour, and stole away to her room with a mixed feeling of remorse for her wrong-doing and a sense of injury, as if circum-

stances had conspired against her. The rainy morning had cleared into a pleasant afternoon and moonlight evening; but Daisy's day ended in a flood of tears. Sitting down in the low window seat, with only the moon to ask her why she wept, she indulged, with a kind of delicious misery, in the unrestrained tears that she had choked back during the day. There was enough self-pity mingled with the self-blame to make her comfortably wretched. Here Mrs. Lawrence found her. "My dear Daisy! Has anything happened? This surely will not cure the headache."

As she lifted the fair young face and smoothed away the golden curls, face and curls softened and etherealized in the silver radiance, the memory of a dear face and shining locks that once nestled in her bosom, but now looked down upon her from beyond the stars, crowned with the ineffable light of the heavenly glory, stirred the mother-love with a tender pain. The pain she

hid in her heart; the tenderness softened her tones as she drew Daisy into her arms with a brooding love.

But she was wise as well as tender. So, if her first care was to soothe and comfort the weeping girl, she did not fail to show her faults in sharp outline; for how could her pupil correct her faults unless she saw and felt them clearly? A general condemnation of ourselves is made without much painful self-blame, and with little effort to correct our wrong. It costs more to say that we were wrong in particular instances; but out of the shame and sorrow of an acknowledged actual sin is born a stronger purpose and more watchful care not to repeat it. When Daisy said, — "It is not the head-ache so much as the heart-ache which needs to be cured," if she replied, — "Perhaps the head-ache makes the heart-ache," it was because she knew very well that our tempers come from the body as well as from the mind, and only a recognition of this fact

would put us in the best way to cure them. Ill-nature is ill-nature, whether arising from unstrung nerves or the provocations of others. In either case, it must be restrained; but it makes a difference to us whether we exercise the patience and forbearance towards our own irritability or another's vexatious conduct. It makes a difference whether we say,—“I slept poorly last night, and feel so cross to-day that nothing goes right,” or,—“Everybody is so cross and exasperating that my patience is sorely tried.” So if Mrs. Lawrence tried to show Daisy that a great part of her trials and faults for the day had grown out of her physical discomfort, it was not to excuse her faults nor prove her trials groundless; but that, seeing their causes, she could more correctly estimate them and learn how to meet similar ones with better results.

“But, Mrs. Lawrence, I could not help the head-ache, and Mary Morris distressed me so that I could not bear it; and I could not study;

and I could not help being vexed when I failed and Monsieur scolded me ; and I could not help being aggravated when so many vexations came one after another, though I am sorry enough for it all."

" Did not bear it ; did not help it, you mean ; we are to exercise the grace of patience, and that we can do only through something hard to bear. In many of the circumstances of our lives, our place is to bear just what comes to us, not to choose what we are to bear. Often the trial is not in the thing itself, but that it is trying to us ; so it sometimes seems as if the very things which are the greatest hindrances to Christian growth beset us constantly ; and when it looks as if it would be so easy to be good under other circumstances, we are apt to feel as if we had some excuse for failing under these. But God rarely sets any soul in what we, in our short-sightedness, would consider the most favorable conditions for its growth in goodness, any more than He hides the mountain oak in a special pavilion to protect

it from wind and storm ; yet He expects each soul to do its best, as the oak to grow into a giant tree. Perhaps God might have strengthened the soul without trial, and the oak without storm ; but who shall question His appointed plan for spiritual or natural growth ? Our physical condition does so materially affect our mental and moral powers, that the care of our health becomes an important duty ; but whether impaired health is a result of our ignorance, or our carelessness, or comes from something beyond our control, the faults arising from it are faults against which we must struggle ; and the trials must be met with patience and sweetness."

"How could I guard against the fault of speaking so unkindly to Abby, when I never thought so unkindly ? I did not suppose I could speak so. I should just as soon have thought of guarding against speaking Greek."

"We are to guard against the spirit which prompts such an expression, and keep our tongues

under especial watch against any hasty words, rather than against particular ones. Passion or sin, under any form, often leaps out into sudden word or act before we are scarcely conscious of its existence in the heart ; and many a guilty man sits down amazed and terrified before his own act. We could scarcely believe that 'the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,' if we did not sometimes experience such a mortifying revelation of ourselves. You see how we learn humility, and sympathy and charity for others' failures and errors."

"I am so glad the Saviour knows all about it ; so, when a little thing is hard for us, His tender pity is touched by the trial, all the same as if it were a great thing. That is a comfort."

"Yes ; that thought gives us comfort and strength. Our faithfulness in these little things, where only God's eye marks it, may be the best test of our character. There are some precious confidences, like little secrets between ourselves

and the Saviour. He knows, and we know, some hard places through which we walk, some trials where we strive to be faithful; and nobody else knows. And the thought that we grieve our Saviour often keeps us from many a secret sin, just as our love for a dear friend makes us guard against displeasing or disappointing that friend."

A reproachful sadness in her tone made Daisy ask quickly :

"And were you disappointed in me to-day, Mrs. Lawrence?"

"Yes, Daisy, disappointed and grieved."

"O Mrs. Lawrence, I am so sorry!"

"And there is One more disappointed and grieved than I am. Have you told Him that you are sorry?"

Daisy hid her face in Mrs. Lawrence's bosom. "If I could only tell Him as I do you, and hear His real voice speaking so tenderly and kindly! I am so sorry I have grieved Him, and I want to tell Him of it just as I do you."

“And that is the way He wants you to tell Him. Let His presence be as real to you, and all your communion with Him be as natural, sincere and loving as with your dearest friends. Is He not nearer and dearer than all others? Do we not carry the burdens of our sins and sorrows to Him, rest in him, hide ourselves in Him? Is He not our hope, our joy, our all in all?”

And even as Mrs. Lawrence helped and comforted Daisy, she found help and comfort for herself in the same precious hopes and consolations; for the mature Christian, as well as the young disciple, realizes Paul's experience: “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”



CHAPTER III.

COMPOSITIONS.

MORNING, with its freshness, hope and sunshine, is so different from evening, with its fatigues, sights and gas-light. It is one thing to take up the burden with a strong, valiant arm, and quite another to lay it down, worn and self-reproachful. The night that comes between the morning and evening, the Sabbath that comes between Saturday night and Monday morning, are the transition steps over which we walk, from the regret to the hope, with the benediction of God's silence and peace resting on us. Sometimes there is something akin to that in our spir-

itual life ;—in the beginning and end of things, for they do come to an end as much as the day does ; there are nights of sweet rest,—Sabbaths of holy stillness, as well as morning, noon and evening.

In the freshness of the dewy morning, with the fading wild flowers before her, Daisy wrote her composition.

“FADED FLOWERS.

GATHERED AT ELLIS'S FALLS.

“ On the banks of the rushing river,
 'Mid the wild water's roar,
Where their ceaseless anthems forever
 Their deep melody pour ;
These growing buds and leaves unfolded
 In most delicate green,
Into forms of beauty molded
 By artists unseen.

“ In the glad and joyous spring-time,
 Wooped by the genial day,
Charmed with songs of the sunny clime,
 And kissed in zephyrs' play,
The fairy buds in beauty burst
 Their folded leaflets free,
While the song that greeted them first
 Was the wild wave's minstrelsy.

“ Adown the steep in hurrying flow
The joyous river boundeth,
And echoing from the rocks below
Its voice unfettered soundeth;
Like an untamed human spirit
Rushing in mad career,
It boldly leaps whate’er would check it,
Scorning doubt or fear.

“ Yet ’mid the eddying waves below
Comes up a floating wreck,
And the shroud of the cataract’s foam
The form of death may deck.
So if we fathom a reckless soul,
That rushes proudly on,
Down deep where waves of passion roll,
We see what wrecks have gone.

“ And e’en in the stream’s victorious song,
Which swells in pealing notes,
As o’er the rocks it dashes along,
A tone of sadness floats;—
A dirge for the beautiful and bright
That, once embarked on its wave,
Have sunk in deep and endless night,
To sleep in a watery grave.

“ And ’mid this ever-varying song
Of the cataract so near,
With the vision of the foamy crest
Which it doth ever wear,
These leaves and flowers in beauty grew,
And lived their summer day,
And ’mid its music ever new
There’s life and death alway.”

Wiser heads than Daisy's have probably nodded approvingly over their own imperfect work ; so she was not foolish above others if she looked complacently upon her faulty measure and halting rhymes. Composition was not the dreaded bugbear to her that girls generally find it. She had thoughts and fancies, and she expressed them easily and prettily ; so her school-mates called her compositions "splendid," though her teachers often erased unnecessary adjectives, and condensed a long paragraph into a brief period, or recalled her from the stars and flowers to common-place subjects. She was too sensible to regard her girlish effusions with foolish vanity, yet it must be owned that she thought they were pretty good for a school-girl. And when Mary Morris peeped over her shoulder and called it "beautiful" as she sat copying it before school, she smiled very pleasantly at the interruption.

Mischievous Mary Morris ! Toying with her pen while she ransacked her brain for thoughts

that were never there, somehow the fantastic fancies that were there jotted themselves down till, hardly knowing it, she had made a sketchy caricature of the group of girls on the roots of the old tree that stretched over the Falls, drawing the faces with marvelous likeness, yet irresistibly comic in the exaggeration. She had rare artistic powers,—her one talent; and with a few bold strokes the whole scene was ludicrously complete. Out of Daisy's mouth waved a streamer with these lines :

“ Leaping the rocks, over goes the river,
Each wave chasing its brother;
As I've seen the scared sheep stiver,
Gallop after each other.”

The picture was innocent enough in Mary's portfolio, but dextrously fastened to Daisy's sash bow, when she rose to read her composition, it became the very spirit of mischief. The girls sitting behind and around her were bursting with suppressed mirth, and the effect of poor Daisy's poetry was quite lost in the sensation which the

picture made. She read on, her face flushing as she felt the disturbance, restlessness and inattention of her audience, while Mary Morris sat demure and attentive, probably meditating what excuse she could offer why she was not prepared with her own composition. When Daisy sat down, Mary slyly detached the picture and placed it upon the desk before her. An angry color came into Daisy's cheek for a moment, and then, it was so comical, a sudden laugh, as quickly checked, betrayed the mischief to Miss Holcombe who was presiding at the desk in Mrs. Lawrence's absence. She was too near-sighted to see always what was going on, but she never failed to hear; and Miss Daisy was called to account in an uncompromising manner. In the investigation the unfortunate picture was brought before the tribunal. At the sight, there was a queer pucker around Miss Holcombe's mouth, and perhaps she wished she had not heard the laugh;—at least she deferred the prosecution of disci-

pline until recess. Daisy was left with a mixed sensation, not altogether agreeable, and somewhere down under her feelings was a resolution not to write a poem next time, — a resolution more easily carried out after her composition was returned with this brief suggestion on the margin: "Take *Quarrels* for your next subject."

If she did not at first appreciate the reason why Miss Holcombe did not encourage her poetic talent, the instructions and suggestions made in the composition class helped her to see the value of real, definite ideas, of actual knowledge, of clear perceptions, as opposed to vague fancies and dreamy sentiments;—that the mental discipline, growth and culture in thought and language which was the object of her school compositions, would not be secured if only her imagination and taste were exercised. So Daisy tried to work patiently over the "dry" subjects that were to give breadth and definiteness to her thought and ballast for her fancies, indulging now and then in

a little by - play of versifying, which she would carry to Miss Holcombe for criticism and suggestions. Finally, Miss Holcombe proposed that she should write a poem for her examination composition, and she found the wings of her muse had not lost their airy lightness while strengthening the muscles. That poem was a success ; and of all the pleasant things said to her about it, nothing gave her such a glow of pleasure as Miss Holcombe's affectionate congratulation, with the quiet remark,—“I like it very much.”



CHAPTER IV.

THE FRENCH PLAY.

I’ll be ‘Eugenie’ and write my poetry, and I’ll find rhyming words without trouble,” said Mary, rolling up her eyes in a poet’s frenzy and assuming a sentimental attitude.

“No, you’ll never remember two lines of French poetry with all your romantic tricks. You’ll have to give that part to somebody who has studied the lessons for the last quarter.”

“Well, I’ll make it up, if I can’t remember it. You’ll see. And here’s Helen ought to be ‘Caroline.’ Her black eyes know how to coquette to perfection.”

"A fine part she would play, with her short curls close to her head, when, in her very first appearance, 'Caroline' has her hair down her shoulders, and is in a world of trouble about a head-dress. Better have somebody whose hair can be stretched more than two inches." The speaker had a mass of dark braids coiled about her head.

Then I think Daisy must have that part," said Mary. "You are sure her hair won't fall off when it is let down loose over her shoulders. The rest of us might have a little anxiety on that point, as there are more chignons that sleep on the dressing table than on the pillow."

"Innocent Daisy for a coquette! Qu'allons nous devenir!"

"I have it! Daisy shall write the poetry and look sentimental; and she speaks French so fluently."

Daisy liked that. So the girls went on arranging their parts and planning the scenes. They

were to have a little French play, "La Vieille Cousine," for an entertainment at the close of the quarter, and, having just finished the reading of the last scenes, were waiting for Monsieur Camolet to decide upon the pupils to represent the characters. There were enough ready to take the parts of Madame Langlois, Eugenie and Caroline, but no one appreciated Ursule and Lili. They were ready enough to be fine ladies, but nobody cared to be a kitchen maid or a poor relation.

Presently M. Camolet came in and assigned the parts authoritatively, choosing Sarah May and Daisy, the best French scholars in school, for Lili and Ursule.

There was great surprise, and the girls expressed some unwillingness to accept his plan, which fretted his temper, and matters grew threatening.

"Can't Ellen Hyde be *la vieille cousine*?" said Daisy, poutingly.

Ellen was a plain, awkward girl. Daisy was sorry the moment she had spoken, as M. Camolet gravely answered: "Miss Hyde will do well whatever I ask her to do, but she has not studied French long enough for this. But what do you want, Mademoiselles? You care only to look pretty. We will have a play where all are fine ladies? Comment stupide! Do n't you know the beauty is to act the part well? The more striking and characteristic, the better. Have none of you spirit and talent enough to seize upon the strong points in a marked character and represent them? Do you want to be lay figures or butterflies? Then we won't have a play." And M. Camolet turned to leave them.

At the door he met Mrs. Lawrence, who saw that something was wrong.

"The young ladies will have nothing but fine dresses and fine ladies. There is enough of that every day; so we will give up the play."

"Oh, no. The young ladies will choose what

we choose," said Mrs. Lawrence; and her very presence seemed to settle the vexed questions. In a few words she made them see, not only that the manner in which they acted the part in a play was more than the part itself, but that in real life our aim should be to do well whatever came to our hand to do;—that the nobility of work consisted not in the kind of work, but in the way it was done. The doer, not the thing done, makes the difference.

“A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.”

While Mrs. Lawrence talked, they comprehended that things are to us what we make out of them, and of course acquiesced in the best arrangement of characters; though, if the truth were told, Sarah did not feel much enthusiasm over her kitchen dress, and Daisy looked dismally at her quaint costume and rattle-traps.

The first rehearsal was not very encouraging,

but after a time they entered into the spirit of the play, and with girlish vivacity and buoyancy made of it an exhaustless source of enjoyment. The light-hearted, exuberant spirit of youth creates for itself unbounded pleasure out of the most untoward things.

M. Camolet's uncompromising criticisms on accent and manner, and the hard study required to memorize the long paragraphs, were wonderfully lightened by numerous private rehearsals, where there was much original rendering, and amusing variations from the printed text.

The play was finally performed with great credit to the pupils and their teacher,—and with sufficient *eclat* to gratify their ambition or vanity. However valuable may have been their increased facility in the use of the French language, the development and balancing of individual talent, and the gain in mental flexibility and application, not less valuable was the lesson they learned,—to do one's best in the work put into

the hand,—to throw one's energies and interest into the given task, so as to stamp a real character upon it, and thus infuse a vital element into common work,—this is to lift daily life above a low level, and clothe it with a spiritual meaning. Thus there will be no dead days ;—there will be no sluggish, indifferent labor.

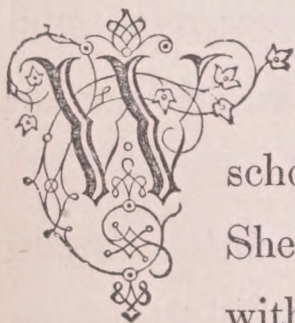
And they saw the necessity of correctness and attention in details, if one would secure a complete, finished performance.

During the rehearsals, it seemed a little thing to Sarah that she should take care to beat her eggs after the manner of a cook, and a trifling thing to Daisy that she should tap her snuff-box and take her pinch just as an old lady would do it ; but each realized the significance of such little things in the finished result. So slow are we to see that we build our lives out of little deeds ;—that each must be perfect in its place, or we have no days rounded into completeness, no work that will bear the eye of the great Task-master.



CHAPTER V.

FROM SCHOOL TO FARM - HOUSE.



WITH the close of the term, Daisy's school - days unexpectedly ended. She expected to spend the vacation with her father at his home in Vermont. This was not "going home" for Daisy. Her mother died before her recollection, and her mother's only sister had taken the little one to her heart and home. When, a few years after, her father had married Mrs. Lewis, a widow with two children, Daisy had still remained with her aunt, though her father sometimes talked of bringing her home. As other children were

added to his family, and Mr. and Mrs. Elwood were so unwilling to spare Daisy from their childless home, and were doing so much more for her than Mr. Seymour could do with his growing family, the coming home had been deferred till it ceased to be a definite plan.

Mr. Seymour cherished an unspoken tenderness for the child of his dead Marion, but their intercourse had not been frequent and familiar enough to make Daisy feel at home with her father. Immediately after his second marriage, he removed to Illinois, and the families had seen little of each other, though, as business required occasional journeys East, he was not a stranger to Daisy, but she was shy and quiet in his presence. During the preceding year, the older brother, who had lived on the home farm in Vermont, had made some exchange of property with Daisy's father, so that the old home came into his possession. Satisfied with western experiences, he closed his business there and brought

his family back again to the New England farm.

For the last two years Mr. and Mrs. Elwood had been traveling in Europe, leaving Daisy under Mrs. Lawrence's care. During this time she had seen her father oftener, and made one pleasant little vacation trip with him to New York. Now, in her comparatively homeless condition, she turned with a more clinging tenderness to her family relations and the old home.

"Hemlocks" had been the Seymour homestead since Daisy's great grandfather built his log cabin among the trees which gave the name to the place, and made a farm out of the wilderness. She had dim recollections of visits there, while her grandmother lived,—the dear old lady with her placid face and snowy hair, for whom Daisy was named, whose old-fashioned gold beads were among her "jewels," from whose well-worn Bible she still read her morning verses, sometimes turning over to read upon the blank leaf, in old-fashioned letters, the name,—*"Hannah Bryant Seymour,"*

—in her grandmother's handwriting; for her real name was not Daisy, but Hannah. She was such a sweet blossom of a child, that her aunt used to call her their little Daisy, and so the name grew with her out of childhood till she seemed to have no other. Then she liked it better herself, and, at school, girls so easily take to pet names that she never heard herself called Hannah except when her father came to see her. Perhaps the unfamiliar name helped to keep a little distance between them.

She was looking forward with pleasant anticipations to the long summer in the country home. The old - fashioned house, with the rambling out-buildings, large barns, the cluster of hemlocks, the pine grove beyond, the grassy slopes, the clover fields, the orchard, the waving corn and the grand old mountains in the distance, were like visions of romance or dreams of poetry in her memory.

The last days of the term came to an end.

The gladsome maidens, with regrets and anticipations, tears and smiles, exchanged their last promises of friendship and correspondence, kissed their last kisses, and scattered out of the warm nest where Mrs. Lawrence, like a mother - bird, had sheltered them with brooding tenderness and care. How few shadows of thought or anxiety or sorrow rested on their faces ! The present was too overflowing, the future too promising, for them to linger regretfully over the past. Yet they had not closed their school year without serious thoughts and sober retrospects. The days had gone from them forever. Their record was completed. It was too late for anything to be changed or added. The golden moments had each received an ineffaceable mark from their hands. The yesterdays can not be revoked. To - day blossoms on their grave. The rosy mornings which ushered them in shine ever more unclouded. The cold gray sunsets in which they buried themselves, can not now be retouched with

crimson and gold. Just as they were fashioned while passing, so they remain.

The journey was full of novelty and interest to Daisy. Her traveling experiences were quite limited, and as she now regarded them, very little - girlish, as she had gone only with her uncle and aunt. It was quite another thing to be a companionable young lady traveling by herself, and she enjoyed the degree of deference and attention with which her presence was recognized. "After all the dear, good times at Mrs. Lawrence's we were only children there; now I am — myself; and "myself" filled quite a space on the car seat, and felt quite independent and self - poised.

With what dignity she repelled the courteous attempt at conversation made by the middle - aged gentleman who, for a time, occupied the seat with her! How straight she looked out at the window when the two young men opposite turned their heads in her direction! How daintily she drew

up her dress and dropped her veil when a crowd rushed in at a way station! With what guarded propriety she moved and looked! As for talking, of course she could have nothing to say to strangers. But she came near being childish once. She had kept her ticket very carefully held between her thumb and finger, ready for the conductor's inspection, and assumed a nonchalant air as if one who was used to traveling had no need to worry or flutter about anything; but after a while, as she became more used to the situation, she forgot to watch herself in her interest in watching others, or in enjoying the picturesque scenery through which they were whirling.

Just as she was gazing at a fine view of the mountains, the conductor touched her arm. "Ticket, Miss." She started up. Ticket? Why, to be sure; where was it? She had not the slightest idea. What a flutter she was in! It was nowhere to be seen. Neither in her hand, her pocket, her book, her basket, nor on the

floor. Here was a dilemma. Her cheeks grew hot, and finally tears of annoyance and embarrassment filled her eyes as she protested she had a ticket once, but could not tell where it was. What should she do? That another ticket could be obtained anywhere except at the station from which she started, never occurred to her, nor that there could be any way of going on without a ticket. She already saw herself put out of the cars, dismayed at her forlorn situation, and covered with shame, because she had lost her ticket.

"Is not this your ticket, Miss?" said a pleasant voice over her shoulder. "It was on the floor under your seat."

How she grasped it. It was the same gentleman who had made the fruitless effort for a little civil talk with her. And there was an amused twinkle in his eye that made her drop her own in confusion, and murmur her "thank you" somewhat inaudibly.

I think she came to the conclusion that it

was not necessary to arm one's self against common courtesies, nor to wear one's dignity and discretion with a supercilious air. She was a little less harsh in judging two giddy girls, who, in their high spirits, seemed to have forgotten that they were not the only occupants of the car.

In the afternoon, her father joined her on his way home from New York, and she felt quite willing to be relieved from taking care of herself. Toward sunset they reached the station at B——, where they were to take a stage coach for Manton, ten miles from the railroad. The change from the car to the coach was delightful. How she enjoyed the ride over the hills! Mr. Seymour took her to an outside seat with him, and the mountain air brought a fresh color to her cheeks, a sparkle in her eye, and an effervescence in her spirits that quite transformed her from the staid, quiet girl her father had usually found her.

She listened with a kind of amazed enjoyment to the talk of the men on the box with the driver. She had been used only to the culture and taste of the parlor and school-room. There was an originality of thought, a crisp directness of speech, a pith and vigor that were quite refreshing. A lady's presence keeps the talk fit for a lady to hear, even among rude men. When Yankee speech or Yankee quirks of thought touch the soberest subject, there is a humorous vein running through it all. The stage-top and mountain air dissipate artificialities and affectations wonderfully. Daisy forgot her boarding-school airs, and even grew enthusiastic over the horses, as the driver called to them with such a ring in his voice,—“Come, boys!” “Hie, Tom!” “Up, Cherry!”

The golden sunset was already fading into twilight when they reached the little village hotel where Harry met them with the large farm wagon, into which they were soon stowed, trunk

and all. The falling shadows began to creep into Daisy's spirits, and she shrank into herself as she realized a sense of strangeness and loneliness. She was so used to the lively, affectionate girls, and now a great silence seemed at once to fall on her. Harry was a stout, good-natured boy of fifteen, with an eye full of possible mischief, and he looked so shyly and curiously, and yet teasingly at her, that she began to feel that boys were terrible. Besides, she was tired. Her exhilaration had subsided, and her eager anticipation changed into a shrinking dread of meeting strange faces and coming into an unfamiliar home.

Pleasantly and affectionately Mr. Seymour brought her into the family and gave her a daughter's place, and kind and cordial was the welcome she received; yet after the late supper she was glad to plead fatigue and go to her room. And shall we confess it? She had a good cry there, like a homesick child; she could hardly

tell for what; but it did not seem as she thought it would.

A sound sleep and the sunshine of the morning brightened her wonderfully. Her room was simply furnished, but everything was so fresh and neat, and the view from the window so delightful, that she made her toilet with great satisfaction in her surroundings. A dainty bit of girlhood she was, as she stood, in her white dress and blue ribbons, framed in the open window, her clear eyes, golden hair and fair face aglow with the beauty of the morning. A very pretty picture Mr. Seymour thought, as, coming across the grassy yard, he looked up to the window with an affectionate "good morning." But when, a little later, she sat down at the breakfast table, she felt somewhat out of place,—almost as if she were a foolish butterfly. All the household gathered at the same table for their meals, and the plain but substantial and abundant food, was served to the hired man and kitchen maid with the same attention as

to the others, and they all carried in their dress and manner a brisk air of work, as if the day meant something more than looking pretty.

Mrs. Seymour and her grown-up daughter, Lucy, as well as Mary, the "hired girl," wore their dark print dresses, the girls with no collar at the throat, and they had a stirring, bustling look, as if they had done half a day's work. Harry and the hired man sat with their loose shirt sleeves, as they had come in from their morning work. Dick, and Robbie, and baby Bell were the children by the second marriage. Dick was seven; Robby, five; and Nell, two years old. They were bright, interesting children, but overflowing with mischief and untrained in manners. Robbie had already torn his gingham blouse, and Nellie's apron was, as Lucy said, "fit for the wash-tub, though she had put it on clean when she dressed her."

Mrs. Seymour was a faithful, true-hearted woman,—one to be sure of in a hard place, but

had no winning brightness or attractive taste in her appearance ; and as Daisy took her seat beside her, she felt a little afraid of her, and her embarrassment was not lessened by Harry's fun-loving gaze or Lucy's keen look of observation and criticism.

Lucy was an important member of the family, —capable, enterprising and high-spirited, quick of temper and quick of speech. Her sparkling eyes, black hair, rosy cheeks and trim figure did not need a fanciful dress to set off their prettiness ; but there was such a lack of grace and sweetness that Daisy never thought of admiring her.

The breakfast was a great trial to Daisy. Accustomed to the fastidious etiquette of Mrs. Lawrence's table, the free and easy manners here made her ill at ease. She could not make the little two-tined steel fork take the place of the large silver one, and was quite lost without a napkin. An immeasurable distance had come between her and everybody else. But the food

was so fresh and good, there was such a hearty, substantial way of taking hold of things in the generous supply provided and used, that, after all, the breakfast deserved her hearty appreciation.

The attempts at conversation with Daisy were rather unsuccessful. There were few things of common interest to them, and Daisy was too young and shy and fastidious to adapt herself readily to her new surroundings.



CHAPTER VI.

SETTLING INTO NEW WAYS.

THAT first week in her father's house could hardly be called a pleasant one to Daisy. The family were kind and attentive, and the freshness and novelty of the new scenes and occupations enlivened each day with continual interest; but her delicate taste and carefully trained manners did not at once fit into the new circumstances, and so made uncomfortable drawbacks to her enjoyment.

When she went into the dairy, with eager interest in the butter and cheese, the smell was disagreeable, and the buttermilk spattered over her cambric dress. As she tripped out over the fragrant

white clover to gather rose-buds with the dew fresh on them, her dainty slippers were wet through, and her skirts drabbled in the heavy dew. She was afraid of the solemn, staring oxen and the frisky young cattle. The staid cows shook their heads at her, the geese chased her with hisses, and the farm dogs growled or barked around her. In-doors and out, she felt out of place. There was so much to be enjoyed, and she felt so eager to be enthusiastic over the country delights, yet she felt as if all her anticipations had been mere poetry and sentiment.

The real country life was prosaic, sternly real, and unsoftened by culture and grace. Life appeared in its rough-looking dress, while she was used to the refinement and taste of conventional fastidiousness. But she had a sensible, resolute spirit, and though her dainty equilibrium might be disturbed by trifles, she soon poised herself in practical good sense and fitted into her place and surroundings with tact and good nature. She

was inexperienced and ignorant in many ways, so she made some mistakes ; but she learned to appreciate excellence and loveliness where polish and style were wanting. She found that people may eat with their knives and not be boors,—that they may set the rules of grammar at defiance in their speech and yet say something worth hearing.

She comprehended something of the growth of iron sinew and iron will, of strong arms and stout hearts, through the hardy training of real work ; and saw that the honest, faithful, industrious worker in real tangible tasks, gathers up forces from the very material that he handles, and strengthens and balances his mind and body into firm compactness and vigor.

Daisy did not see all this clearly ; she only felt it dimly, slowly growing stronger and clearer in her perceptions ; but she learned to make herself useful in household tasks, in helpful interest in others' work, in merry frolic with the children, frank, courageous parrying and return of Harry's

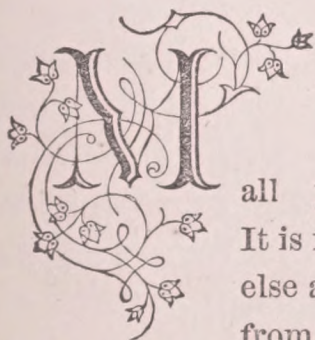
mischievous attacks, and affectionate, thoughtful attentions to her father and mother. Many of her little niceties seemed such surface refinements, that unconsciously she became more simple in her manners, less fastidious in her personal comforts, and more frank and genial in her sympathies and enjoyment of others.

Those beautiful summer mornings awoke new life in her whole being, and the sweet influences of nature started many a slumbering germ into vigorous growth. The fields, woods and hills filled her hands and her heart with new treasures, and, unconscious as the plant that grows, she developed into a freer, stronger, fresher girlhood than her dreams had ever pictured to herself.



CHAPTER VII.

HARRY.



Y DEAR HELEN:—

“I wonder if you have kept all your promises of writing to the girls? It is not so easy to get away from everything else and sit down to write letters, when nothing from morning to night reminds you of it, as it was in our school-room when books and writing stared at us all day, pencils seemed to grow to our fingers, inkstands and sheets of paper had such a social affinity for each other, and our eyes did not see further than the maps, charts and blackboards on the walls.

“Here, my writing desk gets dust-covered, my books are in undisturbed order, my hands are used to the broom and hay-rake, and my eyes look off to the ‘everlasting hills.’

“How is it that, when we have the most to inspire us, we have the least to say? There at school, with the girls about me, with only brick walls and a little patch of sky, I used to write fanciful compositions, poems full of flowers and birds and brooks, and long letters full of descriptions of our rather

monotonous life, and opinions and theories on all possible subjects; while here, with the blue mountains, the woods full of birds and flowers, and such sunrises and sunsets as I never saw before, I don't think of writing poetry. I only seem to feel the beauty and poetry, and with none of the girls to talk with, I scarcely write a letter. I am afraid I am growing lazy; but it is only for vacation, and I do enjoy it so much.

“We had such grand times during the ‘Haying.’ I used to take the children out when they were raking up the hay, as the little ones calculated on a good frolic then, and a ride to the barn on the top of the load; so father found me a light rake, and I used to rake with Harry, and then father would put me on the hay-rack with the children, and, half-buried in the sweet clover blossoms, we would roll along as the slow oxen plodded over the fields to the barn. It always happened towards sunset, and the freshly-mown fields were so smooth and golden in the light, the hay so sweet, and everything so free and joyous, that I wanted to run and jump with the boys.

“Harry (a sort of brother,) and I are very good friends, though I was dreadfully afraid of him at first. He laughed at me because I tried to eat my custard pie with a little fork, made me believe the geese were swans, and chased me over the yard with a green snake, and all such things. Boys are a torment till they find out that you are not afraid of them. Though I was mortally afraid of the snake, of course. I knew Harry would not hurt me, so I plucked up courage and stood still while he dangled it over my hand. It did not feel good, I can assure you; but Harry saw that I was plucky after all; and since then I have learned a good many curious things of him about snakes, toads and other interesting creatures. Besides, he knows all about birds, and where all the wild flowers grow.

I have found ever so many new specimens here. But he do n't care much about the botanical names, and laughs about my learned talk, though I think he really knows more about them than I do.

“ You should see the children. Dick and Robbie are mischievous, wide-awake boys, a plague and a comfort at the same time; but little Nell is just a dear pet always,—a blue-eyed, curly-haired darling. I shall miss her so much when I go back to school. I do n't like to think of school. It is so pleasant, just as everything is now, I should like to live on always just so. Here comes Nellie teasing for a story; so good-bye.

With my love,

DAISY.

Story after story had charmed the little maiden till the fringed lids drooped sleepily over the blue eyes, and the sweet voice murmured a dreamy response to the marvelous feats of Jack the Giant Killer or the pitful fate of Cock Robin, and Daisy sat musing in a dreamy reverie, watching the western sky with the distant hill-tops outlined clearly in the mellow light. Who shall say what the young girl dreams of, looking with wistful eyes out into the future, so full of wonder and expectation?

“ *H-u-nnah! H-u-nnah! I say, H-u-nnah!* ”

called a ringing voice through the house. Daisy smiled, and then pursed up her little mouth decisively as the noisy step came nearer.

"Child alive! why did n't you answer?" said the boy, as he came suddenly upon her.

"Did you call me?" said she, demurely.

"Who else should I mean? Here I have raced up and down, and screamed myself hoarse, and you sitting here, pretending not to hear!"

"My ears do n't hear H-u-nnah, you know."

The boy teased her by the most aggravating pronunciation of her name, though the family had grown into the way of calling her Daisy.

"Anyway, they are big enough to hear anything, and I guess they would hear Hunnah if that was their only chance of getting the ride that is waiting for you. Come, Lightfoot is all ready, and he won't stand." And Harry swept away her writing materials and stirred her up in such a breezy way, that in a few minutes she was in the buggy, settling her hat with a final touch,

and buttoning her gloves as he gave the rein to the impatient horse. He was going to the Post Office for the evening mail, then they would drive around Willow Pond, and home in the moonlight.

"Why will you persist in saying Hunnah? There is no need of being boorish in one's talk. You might at least say Hannah, if you choose that name."

"Well, I declare! next thing you will object to saying rooster, and bossy. Why can't you call things as folks about you do? I guess they always called your grandmother Hunnah, and I reckon she was pretty much a lady, if she did work in a farmer's kitchen. I hate namby - pamby talk, as if one was afraid to let out his mind in a straight - forward fashion, I'll be hanged if I don't. I ain't a - going to tie up my tongue with fine-spun words and girls' fancies. By golly, I won't!"

"Now, Harry, if you talk so I sha'n't ride with

you." And the girl looked and moved as though she really thought of vacating her seat.

"Whoa! Would you like to get out, miss? Allow me to say that the road is rather dusty, and I guess your city boots would ache before you got to the end; but howsomever, if you won't ride, I'm your obedient."

Daisy had a great mind to get out, but she was afraid Harry would drive off and leave her, so she put on her most dignified expression, and with severe gravity answered the saucy boy: "Harry, I expect you will be a gentleman, at least to me."

"Heigho! we are getting on our high-heeled shoes, are we? Now see here, Miss Prink! Boys step heavier and talk louder than girls, and I reckon they have stronger stuff in them. Anyway, if they are good for anything, they are rougher and more careless. They can't put on such little, nice ways without forever thinking about it and holding in; and deliver me from a boy who walks

on a crack all the time. He needs to have the starch taken out of him."

"But, Harry, I don't see why you need to be incorrect and coarse in your talk, and use by-words and slang phrases."

"No more you can't, because you never think that way. But I tell you, it thinks itself in me, and comes out itself, too, just as naturally as this horse frisks and prances."

"But you have put the bits in your horse's mouth, and just back there, down the hill, you held him in with all your strength. I saw how you pulled on the reins. It is a pity if a boy can't drive himself, and hold in when he is going down hill."

"Now, Daisy," and Harry faced round to her, "do you think a fellow is going down hill when he lets drive a square word instead of a round one, and pitches in for an honest, straight-going way of calling things as they are, and saying what he means?"

"I think," said she, unflinchingly, "when a boy do n't try, by self-control and effort, to make himself better, he will grow worse. If he lets himself alone in his carelessness and uncouthness, he will never be a gentleman. Certainly, if, as he says, it is not in him, he will have to put it there or go without it. I do n't see why a boy need be bristling all over with disagreeables. I think he is unkind and ungenerous when he takes pains to annoy others, and does n't try to soften his roughness and refine his coarseness in manners and character. He is neither manly nor gentlemanly."

"I hate a prig," said Harry, sharply.

"Are you so afraid of being called one, that you do n't dare to be civil and courteous and correct in language and manners? That is a cowardly way of shirking out of what is due to your own self-respect and improvement, and common politeness to others."

The boy gave a low whistle, and started the

horse into a brisk trot. They rode on silently for some time. After a while, he said,—“Daisy, I think it is a pity you were not a boy.”

“Why?” said she, innocently.

“Because you would make such a nice one.”

Daisy was silenced. Presently she said,—“Harry, I suppose I don’t know all about it, and I should not set myself up to find fault with you; but I am sure if you think about it and try, you will make it out right yourself.”

“Peck away at me, Daisy. I deserve it bad enough, I know. Perhaps I’ll think of it some day.”

They rode into the village, and drew up at the office, where men and boys were congregated to talk over village matters, read the papers and discuss the news. A knot of men stood on one side talking over the loss of a steamer, but they did not wait to make any inquiries. Daisy had a letter with a foreign post-mark. She was glad, for she had not heard from her aunt for a long

time, and there were letters for her father, and newspapers,—quite a package of mail matter.

How pleasant their ride was around by Willow Pond in the early twilight, with the full moon rising in the east. Either Daisy's lecture, or the quiet, softening influence of the evening, put Harry into one of his best moods, and the brother and sister talked on with more sympathy and earnestness than usual, touching some of the deeper and more hidden interests of their lives. And when Daisy, in her simple way, said,—“Harry, I do so wish you were a Christian,” he did not give her a bantering reply, but, with a serious face, answered,—“I wish so too.”

“And will you not be one?”

“That's the trouble. I wish I was already one. The becoming one is the hard part. I can't get through the process. If one could just take a jump into it without having to ‘experience religion.’”

“It seems to me the jump is just resolving to

be one. I don't think we get through it at all in this life. It is something that keeps going on."

"But one has to start, I suppose. If I was over that part, I could keep on."

"Mrs. Lawrence used to tell us,"—and Daisy hesitated a little; she felt shy and incompetent to talk about it.

"Well, what?"

"That if we really wanted to be Christians, and asked God to show us how and help us, that sincere prayer to Him might be the first step."

"I don't suppose I have got so far as that."

"But you will pray for it?"

"Perhaps you had better do it for me; you know how."

"I will," said she, timidly; "but you must ask for yourself. I can not love God for you."

"No; there is where it pinches. I must come straight up to it myself, and I am never quite ready."

"But when will you be?"

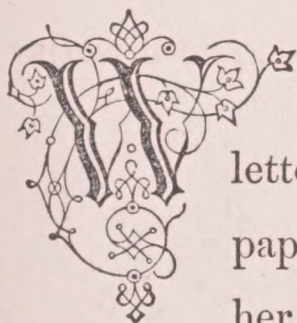
"Oh, I do n't know. Perhaps when Percy comes; he will put me through;" and he whipped up the horse, putting an end to the talk.

Daisy was glad and sorry. Glad that they had spoken at all about it, and that Harry had dropped his bantering enough to speak simply and sincerely, sorry that the talk had been so unsatisfactory.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE GREAT SHADOW.



WHILE Mr. Seymour opened his letters and looked over the newspapers, Daisy read her letter from her aunt. She had written long accounts of places and people that she thought would interest Daisy, and then, in a paragraph added later, said they had suddenly changed their plans, Mr. Elwood's business requiring his presence at home, and they had engaged their passage in the steamer *Illyria* to sail in two weeks.

Daisy exclaimed, in delighted surprise, that her aunt was coming home in two weeks, hardly noticing that her father was reading the account

of the loss of a steamer till the name, "Illyria," caught her ear.

"Why, that is the vessel auntie is to sail in."

"When?" asked Mr. Seymour in a quick voice.

Daisy looked at the date of her letter. It was written some weeks ago, having been delayed in some way.

"Heaven help us!" ejaculated Mr. Seymour, clasping Daisy in his arms.

Daisy's eyes dilated. She did not quite understand. "Only ten saved!" repeated Mr. Seymour.

Poor Daisy!

"My child, we will still hope," said her father. "The next mail may bring more particulars, with the names of the passengers."

But Daisy could only sob in bitter grief. All her future seemed a dark blank in the sudden blow. She listened silently as they tried to comfort her, talking over the probabilities, and with

trembling lips answered their good-night as she went up to her little room.

An hour later, Mrs. Seymour found her still weeping almost hysterically, lying just as she had thrown herself, without undressing, upon the bed. Gathering her in her motherly arms, Mrs. Seymour soothed and quieted her with a few simple, strong words of love and trust, commended her to the tender, pitying Comforter, undressed and put her to bed as she would a child, and, sitting by the bedside, stroked her hair softly till the exhausted child fell asleep.

With the morning came the indistinct consciousness of something dreadful. She awoke early in the first flush of the sunrise, and, as the sad fact grew clearer in her thought, the strength of the morning came to her with blessing.

“ She was as a child that cries,
But crying, knows his father near.”

With a simple faith she turned to her Saviour, thinking to Him rather than formally praying. She crept out of bed for her little Testament, and

turned over to the comforting texts, saying them softly to herself as she gazed out at the eastern sky; and though the tears would come, there was no longer the tumult of weeping, the abandonment of grief. When Mrs. Seymour stole in to see if she were still sleeping, the fair face turned on the pillow to meet her with a pitiful smile struggling to the lips, and a calm, trustful light in the still tearful eyes.

They followed her with a tender wistfulness through the day. She was no longer demonstrative in her grief, but it was as if a great silence had fallen upon her, or some mysterious presence brooded over her.

The evening mail brought the full list of passengers. Alas! Mr. and Mrs. Elwood were among the missing. The days that went on were very hard for Daisy. One can reach heights of Christian exaltation and faith, can climb to some mount of transfiguration, but it is not so easy to remain there. Human nature does not

easily keep the high places it can attain. And it seemed to her as if she had to learn over and over the same things, fight the same battles each day, and continually comfort herself anew under the same weight of sorrow.

After any great strain on our nature, the nerveless, dull, leaden state in the reaction from such tension, is often harder to bear than the sharp pain, hard fight, or overwhelming grief. We rally all our forces to meet the pressing emergency or threatened danger, and then sink down powerless, all our strength gone out of us. At such times, how great is the Christian's comfort of resting in God.

Mr. Seymour soon went to the city to inquire into the circumstances and gather such details as could be gained concerning Mr. Elwood's loss, and attend to some business affairs involved in his sudden death. Here he found a very unsatisfactory condition of things.

Mr. Elwood's partner had proved dishonest, and the discovery of the involved condition of his pecuniary affairs had led to Mr. Elwood's sudden decision to return from Europe. An investigation was made at once, but it was too late to retrieve the consequences of the long continued mismanagement and dishonesty. The business records were in inextricable confusion, and all the property that could be clearly shown would not meet the liabilities of the firm. It was a long time before the affairs could be settled. The family mansion, the home of the Elwoods through two or three generations, was sold, and all available property given up to the creditors.

The greater part of Daisy's little patrimony, inherited from her mother, was involved in the general loss. Thus, with the death of her uncle and aunt, and the loss of her small property, all her plans for the future were destroyed, and she was left to a permanent home with her father.

All this came by degrees, however, and cir-

cumstances and events continued to bind her more strongly to her new home, till gradually she became so rooted to the place that only a severe wrenching of the clinging fibers would have loosened their hold.

First came the sickness of little Nellie. She was a bright little fairy, full of beauty and grace, a constant delight to Daisy's eyes, while her sweet, winning ways made her the joy of her heart. They had been the best of friends from the beginning, and in the busy household, Nellie had fallen more and more under her care till the child quite depended on her.

In the sultry August days, the little joyous creature wilted like a delicate flower. The little springing feet that seemed to have unseen wings, lagged slowly after the robust boys in their childish play, while the pleading voice begged piteously,—“Do n't run away from me.” The eyes grew heavy, and the cheeks lost their fresh color or flushed into bright crimson. She would climb

into Daisy's lap, with touching patience, complaining only,—“Nellie is so tired;” and nestling down quietly, neither asleep nor wide awake, would listen to Daisy's talking and singing as if the sound of the dear voice soothed and rested her, while she showed little interest in the story or the song. Then she grew sicker, and then very sick. The old doctor shook his head as he watched the changing phases of the disease, and the household machinery stood still as the family moved about with hushed voices and softened foot-falls.

Daisy was an unwearied, tender nurse, and the child liked best to take the medicine from her hand, and feel her soft touch on her burning face. The heavy eyes would follow her beseechingly as she moved about the room, and the piteous moan was checked as she bent over her with loving words and tender kisses.

Daisy did not stop to realize anything, only doing from one hour to another what came to her,

except when her mother sent her away to rest and sleep, or her father insisted on a walk or a drive for a breath of fresh air. She always yielded her place to Mrs. Seymour unresistingly. The anxiety and trial of the clinging mother-love had made Mrs. Seymour's face sharp-set with suffering, but with strong self-control she held back her cry of agony while there was still something to be done. She had known trial and sorrow; all the good things of her life had been dearly bought or overshadowed with a burden or grief. Her reticence was sometimes patient endurance or silent courage.

Nellie was a ray of unclouded sunshine. Her days were too full of work and care for her to pet her child much, or give herself the indulgence of an absorbing enjoyment in her. Many a hard-working woman stints herself in her sweetest joys and tenderest sympathies. She hardly affords to take comfort with her children. Such love has at times a deeper intensity from its repression.

Daisy had something like a child's wonder and fear in this dreadful anxiety and foreboding of death ; the whole experience was so new to her. Mrs. Seymour had followed her loved ones before as they went down into the dark valley ; yet to her, as to us all, the messenger seemed ever to come in a new and strange way. But they were hardly thinking of anything except to care for the child's wants, and watch and wait. There come times to us when we do not attempt to measure things. We just go on. After a while there is an end, and then we stop to take breath and look back.

The days and nights came and passed. The little sufferer tossed in excited delirium or lay in stupefied insensibility. Then the violence of the disease abated, and they watched with trembling hope for the new life to come back to the racked and exhausted body ; but the little spirit had gone too far away across the river to be recalled. The further shore was nearer to it. It no longer

felt the strong hold of the clinging hands, nor heard the earnest entreaties of the loving voices on this side. The light from the other world shone brighter, the songs of the angels were clearer, the voice of the Infinite Father called with a tenderer persuasion ;—the child was going home. While they still fancied the eyelids trembled with returning strength, and the breath grew less fluttering through the sweet lips, she was already gone.

Gone ! Gone where ? After all that God's word makes us sure of, those gone from mortal sight seem to have gone out into utter darkness and mystery. We know so little about the other world that it does not always seem real. Nobody comes back to tell us of its secrets. However close we may be to it, however near to the time of our own entrance there, our eyes can not see, our hands can not touch anything in it. The barrier must be impenetrable, or those who have loved so dearly here would sometimes give a

token to those left behind, we have such a yearning to know about it! What a wistful longing comes to the heart of those who have just followed loved ones so tenderly and devotedly to the end, and all at once they are gone,—one moment here, and then as utterly removed from us as if body and soul were swallowed up in mysterious destruction. "That where I am, there ye may be also." In that word we may rest without fear and with strong assurance. The presence of the Saviour is the surety for life and all good things; yet for us who are left behind, even that will often seem shadowy and unreal.

But even now I sit at my window and look out upon these leafless trees, stretching up their bare branches and waiting patiently and trustfully for the spring to bring the resurrection of life to them, when they shall be clothed anew in living green; and they seem to me like human preachers rebuking my impatient questioning of the future.

Who does not picture the days that followed? How many households have known a similar experience! How many hearts carry the graves of their dead with a softened but unforgotten grief!

The last look had been taken at the shrouded form, the unostentatious funeral service was over, the kind-hearted neighbors, having expressed their sympathy in simple country ways, had gone, and the afflicted family were left alone with their grief.

There was almost a feeling of relief after it was all over; and the anxiety, excitement and sorrow, which had held them without rest for such a time, seemed to have gone down into the grave, and the glorified presence of the angel child to have come into their hearts.

The terrible loneliness of the home from which one has gone out, leaving a place forevermore vacant, must come to the stricken ones. The brooding shadows will rest upon the silent rooms; the trailing garments of the death angel sweep

along with muffled rustling through the twilight shadows ; yet, when we have given our dead into the bosom of mother earth, we look up and recognize their living forms and radiant faces bending down upon us from above. While the lifeless body still lay in the darkened chamber, or we saw it shrouded in the narrow coffin, the bewildered eye did not see the loved one in the cold clay, yet could not look away to find the spirit while the form was still with us. The grave hides and yet gives back our dead in a new and glorified life.

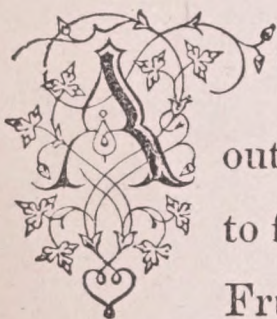
That purple sunset brought a holy calm to the household at Hemlocks. This experience of sickness and death went down deeper into Daisy's heart than anything had gone before. It was real, solemn, yet full of a hope that fastened upon eternal things. It brought the next world nearer, and linked "the life that now is" with "that which is to come" in more visible connection. The death of her uncle and aunt had been

a sore grief; yet, in her long separation from them, she did not feel the hand of death so near her when they were taken. Here, the little child had been taken out of her arms, and Death had almost touched her. She felt closer to the Good Shepherd who had taken the lamb to His bosom.



CHAPTER IX.

A NEW CHORD STRUCK.



WEEK later Daisy had strolled out after tea to enjoy the sunset and to forage among the early apple trees. Fruit never tastes sweeter than when gathered in the first flush of ripeness, whether the fingers plunge down through the cool grass where it nestles half hidden, just as it dropped mellow and juicy from the generous tree, or the hand stretches up venturously among the laden boughs, trying the softness of the rosy cheeks, if they dent under the thumb pressure and loosen from the yielding twig with willing bounty.



Daisy was reaching up for some Porter apples just above her head. Page 93.

Daisy was reaching up for some Porter apples just above her head. She stood on the topmost bar of the fence, poised on one elastic foot, one hand grasping an overhanging bough to steady herself, while the other was catching at the foliage beyond to pull the branch with its mellow fruit within her reach. The airy lightness of the figure and grace of the attitude, the fair, eager, upturned face, with the rippling curls falling back in golden waves and ringlets aglow in the sunset light, caught the eye of a young man sauntering up the lane. No winged Mercury, just springing from the earth into a heavenward flight, could have kindled the eye or thrilled the heart with a more exquisite airiness and grace.

The youth stood still in surprise and admiration. Had his eyes suddenly created this beautiful vision? or had he lost his way and come suddenly into some classic vale, where gods and goddesses still wandered among the trees?

That she was a flesh and blood reality he was

soon convinced ; for, with a venturesome spring to grasp the apples, she lost her foothold and swung free of the fence, still clinging to the apple bough, which, bending and then breaking with her weight, she dropped like a fairy and sank down into the grass with a laughing exclamation at her own mishap. The young man was rather bashful, and, satisfied that the maiden needed no knight to come to her rescue, and confident that one who browsed among the apple trees in that free way must be domesticated at Hemlocks, he was sure his curiosity would be gratified in good time ; so he walked on to the house and surprised the family by his unexpected arrival. He liked to come in upon them in this quiet way. He liked the long, pleasant walk from the village, after the day's travel and the first glimpse of the real home life, when no preparation had shaded its strong outlines, or softened its vivid colors, or destroyed the fresh naturalness of its everyday dress. No surprise could miss a welcome,

for Percy had his own sure place in all their hearts.

The eager gladness with which one after another greeted him, was sobered as they thought of the little joyous darling who used to climb into his arms, with her innocent ways and sweet caresses. The lips sometimes shrink from uttering the thought that lies heavy in each heart, and grief builds a barrier of reserve in the confidence of close friends. So a silence would fall upon the talk, and a restraint check the inquiries,—each a little afraid to touch abruptly on the sacredness of sorrow; but Mr. Seymour, as he grasped the hand of the young man, almost in his first welcome, alluded in so simple and natural a way to the little voice which he missed in their greetings, that then they wondered at the shrinking hesitation which they had felt. Percy had a tender heart, and he loved Nellie; yet, the rustle and whirl of the great world still hanging about him, his spirits were only toned down, not op-

pressed, with the weight left by the sight of Nellie's suffering and death, and the constant missing of her presence.

Daisy came loitering in at dusk-fall, startled at the presence of a stranger. When Mr. Seymour introduced her to Percy, she looked so quiet and unpretending, and answered in such a shy, quiet manner, that he could scarcely recognize her as the same person who had surprised him into such enthusiastic admiration. It was as if the glow of light had suddenly gone out of a beautiful picture, or the rosy clouds had faded into a faint flush or dead gray.

He did not seem to notice her much; so she soon recovered from her startled surprise, and was listening with interest to his varied talk, when he turned suddenly to her.

"Miss Daisy, are you fond of apples?"

So, then, he had seen her!

"Very," said she, laconically, with a deepening color and twinkle of the eye.

"Are you in the habit of swinging on the apple trees?"

"Sometimes. It is very good exercise; better than any gymnastic apparatus," glancing at his full chest and broad shoulders which he carried with a gymnast's conscious pride.

"We will try it some day, and see which trains muscles best; shall we?"

"No; you are too heavy; you will break the branches."

"And you do n't?"

"It was only a little one, with no apples on it," said she, deprecatingly.

"Have you not learned, Miss Daisy, that we should be content with what lies within our reach; that, aspiring too high, we lose even the good already in our hands?"

"But I did get the apples."

"And had a fall!"

"Mr. Percy, is not the best always a little above us, so that we must make an effort to gain

it? If we succeed in reaching it, should we mind any fall caught in the endeavor? The good once secured, who counts up the mishaps in the struggle?"

"That is, we don't mind the scars if we win the battle." He glanced at Daisy's hand. There was a long scratch across it, marked by the rough twig.

"*Cela depend.* If the battle is worth fighting," said she, a little ruefully.

"That is the worst of it," said he, partly to himself. "We don't look our foes in the face and measure the combat before we begin. We are already in the fight before we see the foe; whether he is worthy our mettle or not, there is nothing for us but to strike out, trusting to God and our good right hand."

The young man spoke a little bitterly, as if there was a sore spot within; then, turning to Daisy, he said: "If the tufted grass had concealed sharp rocks instead of inciting to brave

efforts, you might have enforced the prudent counsel, 'Look before you leap.'"

"If I were always hunting for possible dangers, I should never venture on anything. Certainly, if I had looked around and seen a young man staring at me, I should not have climbed after the apples."

"And we should have missed our little sparing. So you browse among thoughts and principles as well as among apple trees? You have been turned loose in as good pasturage as Charles Lamb's sister. Do you never catch a fall there, and do you always secure what you reach after?"

"I fail a great many times, and my conscience and pride get hurt; but I do n't know yet whether I shall secure what I am reaching after, for I am still trying. I do n't see how we can ever leave off efforts to grow wiser and better."

"And to prick and goad other people out of their lazy loitering into a 'double-quick' on the

duty march," said Harry, who had been listening a few minutes. "I tell you, Percy, she is a regular thorn, sticking into your conscience in the most unmerciful manner."

"Now, Harry, you know I do n't mean to be such a disagreeable fault - finder."

"No, I suppose you can not help it. You just keep being so good yourself, that a fellow always feels as if he had done something bad, or was just a-going to, when you are 'round. And then you know, you are apt to preach a little. Here you have begun on Percy."

"I think he began on me. I am sure I have not lectured him."

"No, Miss Daisy; you have only told me not to mistake a mishap for a failure, and to estimate success by the thing gained, not by the cost. Now let me help you eat the apples."

They drew around the open windows where the moonlight shone in, and the family chat brightened with mutual inquiries, personal histories,

playful bantering and critical or complimentary comments.

The next morning Daisy prinked before the glass with unusual care. She was greatly inclined to put on a white morning dress, but she feared Lucy would laugh at her. She had left off a fancy morning toilet some time ago, finding it hardly suitable for the ordinary morning occupations, and she soon learned to take care that her personal habits should not make unnecessary labor for others. Hitherto, she had not realized how much work the gratification of her fastidious tastes had cost,—that the indulgence in habits of nicety and elegance in one's personal appointments, involves somebody's care and hand-labor. When such work had been done by servants who were paid for doing those very things, and done for the most part away from her observation, she had not realized that her spotless white dresses and dainty ruffled skirts were due to an efficient, well-paid laundress, as much as to her own

neatness and taste. At Hemlocks, where all shared in the household labors, Daisy saw somebody's work made harder by her dainty dressing, and a little experience in ironing tucks and ruffles and puffs, made her willing to spare her own fingers as well as other's; so, while still neat and tasteful in her morning appearance, she did not wear white cambric, pique and blue ribbons to wash dishes and dust rooms. So she turned away with a sigh from the tempting white suit, to select her very prettiest print,—a white ground covered with little blue sprays, a becoming collar with a simple knot of blue ribbon for the throat, and fastened up and dropped down ringlets in most careless but coquettish devices. Then she hastened down to spread the breakfast table, which was one of her duties. Very carefully she arranged the dishes, rubbing a plate now and then to make it shine with an extra polish, choosing the brightest knives and disposing the plates to cover any stains upon the table-cloth, then stand-

ing off to take a view of the whole effect, while she secretly wondered if Percy would notice the improvement in the table arrangements since she had the care of them.

Simple - hearted Daisy ! She had yet to learn how often little efforts to please seem wasted,—how frequently the tasteful eye and skillful hand have wrought their pleasing effects only to be unnoticed and unappreciated.

The family gathered at the breakfast table, but Percy and Harry were missing. They had taken an early bite of bread and butter, and gone off on a fishing excursion. Daisy did not see why men and boys must needs tramp off in such an uncivilized manner, roughing it in the woods or on the pond, getting their feet wet, their clothes torn and their faces sunburnt, all for a few fishes, when they might buy fish any day.

She should have thought that the first day Percy was at home, he would care more to enjoy the family in the house, or take a drive, or walk

about the farm in a gentlemanly way. While she was wondering at Percy's bad taste, and feeling as if somebody had been slighted, she forgot to spread Robbie's bread and butter; and the hungry child clamored to Lucy on the other side, who was looking after Dick's wants.

"Daisy, I should think you might see to one of the children," said she, sharply.

"Here, Robbie. I'll take care of you.

"But you have got something in your ears, Daisy, so you can't hear this morning."

"I hear you now plain enough. Don't tease any more. Here is a slice of bread for you;" and Daisy attended to him very faithfully for the next few minutes, though she did wish children were not so greedy, and that Lucy and mother would take more pains with their behavior at table, they were so ill-mannered, would take such large mouthfuls, daub their faces and hands, and eat so fast.

Daisy's equanimity was ruffled. She did not

feel perfectly good-natured. Things had not gone on according to her programme.

Breakfast over, Mrs. Seymour said to Daisy :
"I was going to ask you to go down to the lower garden after the dew has dried a little, to pick the beans and corn for dinner ; but I see you have on a clean light dress, and you won't like to drabble it. Perhaps Lucy can get time after she takes care of the butter."

"Oh, no," Daisy said, quickly. "I do n't mind changing my dress. I can go as well as not."

She liked to go out into the fields in the freshness of the morning, and the house seemed especially tiresome and disagreeable that particular morning. She soon changed her pretty dress for a plain, dark one, already showing various stains, and marks of useful wear, wiped the dishes, dusted the sitting-room and put her own room in order ; then, tying on a large sun-bonnet, which, though less picturesque, protected her

face and neck much better than a hat, she started off with a large vegetable basket. Dick and Robbie called after her to let them go with her. Now Daisy would much rather go alone. She liked her own thoughts, and the boys were always bothering her with questions, or bickering and teasing each other. Still, she could not resist their eager, affectionate teasing, and they ran racing down the lawn, over into the field to the lower side where was a large vegetable garden. Kicking and jumping and shouting, they galloped through the grass with many a tumble and scream, chased each other about, and cut up endless antics that had no meaning save as the outburst of a child's buoyant spirit.

Daisy moved about among the tall bean - poles laden with the luxuriant vines, the red - veined pods gleaming out among the leaves, the long green corn leaves rustling with the stir of air, and the soft silk tassels nodding their golden fringes. She was some time gathering the beans, and then

turned to the corn ears, parting the green husks to see if the growing kernels were filled out enough, or had become too hard for eating. A sudden scream from Robbie caused her to set down her basket and rush to the rescue. The little fellow had plunged into the marshy mire down by the brook, and, floundering about in the reeds and water and mud, was thoroughly frightened and bedraggled from head to foot. Away went Daisy's delicious dreaminess of thought and fancy. She soon brought the boy to firm footing, soothed his crying, then led him back to the house with Dicky trotting after, made Robbie once more presentable in a fresh suit of clothes, and, setting the boys down to amuse themselves with a box of puzzles, went back after her basket.

Slowly returning with it hanging heavy on her arm, heated and tired, she would have been glad to be left in peace; but no, the boys must help her shell the beans. Away they threw the puzzles, and ran for dishes, and then teased to have

them filled. There was nothing left for Daisy to do but to take them with her out to the shady kitchen porch, where she sat upon the door-step, pulling off her sun - bonnet and pushing back the tangled curls from her burning face, while the boisterous little fellows settled down upon the grass, where they busied their fingers among the beans, overturning their dishes, mixing the full and empty pods, spilling the beans or throwing them into each other's faces, till Daisy was glad to tell them stories to keep them quiet.

She had just finished one marvelous history of adventure, which made the boys stare with wide-open eyes, their dishes of beans tipped over unnoticed, when a manly voice over her shoulder asked: "Can't the big boy shell beans and hear the stories, too?" and then the owner of the voice was stretched lazily on the grass at her feet, and a pair of dark eyes looked mischievously into her face. Taking possession of one of the dishes, he proceeded quietly to fill it with fresh pods, and,

with assumed ignorance and awkwardness, made the boys show him where to find the beans and how to get them out, till Daisy found her tongue.

Perhaps he thought she felt embarrassed because he had overheard her child's story. Instead of that, she was overwhelmed with a sudden consciousness that her face was red, her hair matted with perspiration, her dress unbecoming, the be-draggled skirt spread out conspicuously over the door-stone, displaying her old boots covered with mud and gravel. Perhaps her mortified vanity would have been soothed if she had read the young man's thoughts as he glanced up into the flushed face, with the moist curls clinging about the forehead and temples, watched the little fingers moving in and out among the rosy bean pods, the plump, white arm with the sleeve tucked above the elbow, and the symmetrical figure which even the plain dress and Lucy's large, soap-discolored apron could not hide. Whatever he thought, he only joined the boys in

teasing for another story. There was no use in attempting to escape from her dilemma; she could only make the best of it; so she gathered up her courage and told the story of Horatius,

“ Who kept the bridge so well
In the brave days of old.”

Explaining the circumstances and simplifying her speech to the boys' comprehension, they listened with eager faces to the description of the armies and the hand - to - hand fight, as the brave men kept the enemy at bay, and held their breath, as, with eyes kindling and face glowing with enthusiasm, she described the heroic deeds of those old warriors, the crashing of the bridge under the heavy ax - strokes, the plunge of Horatius into the surging Tiber, and his safe arrival upon the other shore. Then Percy brought out “ Macaulay's Lays of Rome,” and read the spirit stirring ballad. Lucy came out and carried away the beans to cook, and Daisy forgot her old dress, tangled hair and the boys leaning their elbows on

her lap; and as Percy looked up now and then into her eloquent face, the words glowed with a new fire, and his voice melted into richer, fuller tones as he read how Horatius looked on

“The white porch of his home,”

and prayed to “Father Tiber” to spare his life; or his words rang out strong and clear as his heart stirred with kindred daring at the story of the brave fight and fearless plunge.

The reading was scarcely finished when Lucy called to Daisy, asking, — “Could she set the table?”

Like one in a dream Daisy moved away, as if her eyes were still gazing into the turbulent Tiber to see the crest of Horatius appear above the surges, or her ears were still listening to the rapturous cheers that welcomed him up the bank. But dinner was imperative, and she soon came back to real life. Percy and Harry were superintending the cooking of their fish, which they had insisted on eating for dinner, as they were

"savagely hungry," and all heroism and sentiment slipped out of sight while potatoes were peeled, beans buttered and cucumbers sliced.

But the day was already crowned in Daisy's thoughts. Alas, for us, that we can not crown all our days with a golden aureole;—that we can not lift them above their prosaic literalness into an ideal truth and beauty! Alas, for us, when all illusions have melted away, and we no longer idealize people or things!

To aspire after a grand impossibility makes grand results possible to us. The aspiration and endeavor that grasp beyond anything that we see realized, lift the soul to a higher level than it could otherwise have reached. Our eyes must see visions, or they will be blind to the noblest realities. The imagination must conceive the fairest ideals before the beautiful creations are wrought in form and color.

"Let none henceforward shrink from daring dreams,
For earnest hearts shall find their dreams fulfilled."

And if our own lives have a hidden glory shining through them from the ineffable light that our eyes have caught glimpses of, toward which our faces are turned, may not other lives have their ideal meaning as well as their prose translation? Is it not a clear-sighted rather than a delusive vision which sees the possibilities in another's nature, interprets the act by the endeavor, and measures what the hand has wrought, not by the imperfect execution, but by the ideal conception shadowed forth? Eyes that look deep enough to see what lies underneath, vision that is delicate enough to catch the faint tracery of the exquisite design in the unfinished pattern, sight that is spiritual enough to see the angel imprisoned in the block of marble,—these are the best interpreters of other lives; these work out the most masterful forms of excellence and truth in their own.

There are a thousand shades of meaning in a truth. The soul is too ethereal to be daguer-

reotyped completely in single acts. The noon-day sun reveals every nook and corner of the landscape, yet the sunrise and sunset coloring of the same scene shows us new beauty. The white ray of light is good for every-day purposes; but who would like to miss always the prismatic colors concealed therein? Artists seek to represent the ideals of the faces they paint, and these pictures are often truer to the person's own consciousness or the perception of those who know them best, than any exact copying of feature and complexion.

In dealing with people and facts, may not the heart and imagination add some delicate coloring which the cold thought missed? interpret some mystic tracery which appears to the eye only like ragged lines? Of course truth and fact must be held. One should never pervert, nor distort, nor take a one-sided view for the sake of effect. But what is truth, or fact? The bald, rugged outline of an object, or the same object with color and shading?

Is not what I am, to be measured a very little by what I try to be? Is not aspiration as well as success a part of myself? Things can not always be honestly separated from their accessories. A clear, keen eye needs a warm heart to make the vision correct. "Light, bring no blindness!" is an invocation appropriate to all who set their faces to the pursuit of truth.

Let no harsh hand brush away a young girl's dreamy sentiment or innocent fancies, as if they were gossamer cobwebs. Let no strong mid-day glare rudely dispel the rosy mists or many-hued clouds with which her young eyes drape common objects.

"I slept and dreamed that life was beauty,
I woke and found that life was duty;
Was my dream then a shadowy lie?"

Happy the girlhood that develops under a wise and tender love, and learns both

"To clothe the palpable and familiar
With golden exhalations of the dawn,"

and find in every-day duty the fulfillment of her

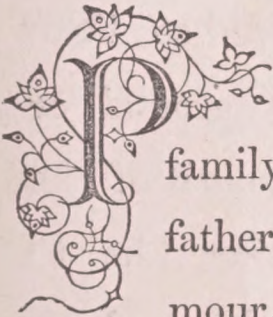
prophetic dream ; — blessed the daughter who purified and spiritualized by the tenderness, sweetness and beauty of her sentiments and the ideal excellence of her aspirations, grows stronger in the effort to realize them, nobler and better as they are wrought into action.

As mere sentiments and fancies they may degenerate into weakness and affectation ; as mere fastidiousness and taste, they may grow into selfishness and superficial culture ; but sinking down into the unsounded depths of the slumbering soul, they vivify, ennoble and refine the real elements which enter into the essence of character, infuse a gracious influence into the germs of vital thought and earnest action, and crown with spiritual beauty the simple but intensely real daily duties that grow out of the human relations that God has ordained.



CHAPTER X.

EYES OPENING.

ERCY Willard was one of the family, yet not of their blood. His father was an early friend of Mr. Seymour, and at his death, left his boy under his friend's guardianship, his mother having died in his infancy. The child had grown up without a mother's care and affection, and his sensitive nature, turned back upon itself, became morbid; so the silent, somewhat morose boy did not win the interest and attention of strangers. Sent early to school, he had passed from one class to another, making creditable progress in his studies, but never distinguishing himself by

any marked success in scholarship, nor making many friends among his playmates. Repressed in the outgoings of his nature, there had been a precocious growth of thought and feeling in silence and loneliness.

A slow fever, with a lingering convalescence, having interrupted his study for some time, the boy seemed so debilitated, and showed so little ambition or interest to recover lost ground or take up any work again, that the Principal of the school wrote to Mr. Seymour advising him to take him from school until his health and energy were restored. Mr. Seymour came to see Percy, and took him home at once. He appreciated Mr. Seymour's kindness, and was too courteous in manner not to make an effort to respond to the kindness and interest expressed; still it was plain that he preferred to be let alone. Shrinking within himself, he repelled sympathy and affection. After a time the home influence melted the sensitive reserve and softened the forbidding

shyness. Mrs. Seymour was kind, though not especially tender; Lucy was a frank, sincere girl, but did not force pity upon him nor demand sympathy for herself; so the strange plant was left to root itself in free, natural growth in the healthy soil, and, after a time, the fibers stretched out vigorously, and the clogged currents flowed free and strong.

He drifted through the transition period from boyhood to youth with many risks on the hidden rocks and treacherous currents, but, balanced by his own self-respect and refined tastes, and upheld by the restful affection and confidence of the family who made him at home with them, he did not run loose from wholesome restraints, nor go far in any downward course. During the first year of his college life, he was a trial to their patience and affection, and a source of anxiety and discouragement, swinging restlessly from the old moorings; neither home influence nor Christian training seemed strong enough to keep his

head and heart from false philosophy and recreant conduct ; but in the beginning of the second year the Spirit of God moved upon the hearts of those young men, and the work of grace went on until two - thirds of the students became decided Christians. Percy was one of the first converts, and from that period he had been growing and developing in strength and earnestness, a comfort and hope to his friends.

Graduating from college at the age of twenty, he decided to spend two years in teaching before commencing his professional study, partly from pecuniary needs, and partly to settle his plans more definitely and make his choice more deliberate and judicious. Earlier in his educational course he had looked forward to law as his profession, and it still offered many inducements to his judgment and taste, as well as to his ambition, yet, after his conversion, he heard sometimes a voice saying,—“Go work in my vineyard.” He was not quite ready to listen to that

voice ; he was not sure that God called him to that work ; he felt in many ways unfitted for it ; he shrank a little from it. So he waited,—putting off the decision from time to time, studying and working for the man, not for the profession. Intellectually, this was a gain, developing his mental powers with a balanced strength and securing a wider range in his attainments. But this unsettled state of mind was not comfortable or healthy. There were conflicts within,—variations in his spiritual strength and enjoyment ;—there was a weakening of his Christian force and vigor,—a consciousness of cowardly shrinking from momentous decisions and stern responsibilities.

It is not always easy to decide a question of duty ; but when we put off settling the question because we are a little afraid of it, or unwilling to meet the conclusions, we lower the tone of our whole Christian character. When we are entirely willing to accept the will of God, and ready to

avail ourselves of any means to throw light on our course, then we may wait with patience and trust, drawing nearer to God even through the darkness.

Percy had taught a year in a Classical School, and accompanied a family in a summer tour as traveling tutor for the boys. They were going abroad for a few months, and proposed to him to continue with them in the same relation. He had decided to accept the situation, and was to sail in three weeks, for an absence of four months.

The three weeks passed very pleasantly. Daisy wondered that they had not found their quiet life very stupid before he came. Everything waked up and put on a new character. Harry showed a more manly earnestness under his mischief. The boy had more feeling and principle than she had given him credit for. And she began to like Lucy with a remorseful tenderness. The two girls had not been attracted to each

other. Very unlike in character and taste, Lucy had no patience with Daisy's little affectations, vanities and fastidiousness; and Daisy shrank from Lucy's quick perceptions and honest, unsoftened speech, and stood a little in awe of her practical knowledge and efficient, resolute accomplishment of whatever she undertook.

Daisy did not know the patience, unselfishness and self-sacrifice which had denied herself girlish indulgences to share in her mother's care and work, and put off the sweet hopes of maiden love to relieve her mother's burdened hands. How could Lucy look on Daisy's tasteful dresses, white hands, winning ways and refined manners, which showed in sharp contrast the difference in their lives, and not feel as if she herself had been cheated out of something of the beauty and grace of girlhood? How could she see Daisy's education, accomplishments and cultivated tastes, without a painful sense of her own lack, and a bitter thought of what "might have been" had the same

opportunities come to her? Her slighting appreciation of Daisy's culture and taste was in part the expression of her own effort to be contented without them; and now and then her tones were sharpened by envy. Daisy's patience, sweet temper and real strength of character in meeting the trials that came to her, and the unselfish service she had rendered during these weeks, had softened Lucy's heart toward her, and Percy's recognition of her own faithfulness, truth and trustworthiness showed more of her real worth to Daisy. She had a sister's pride in him, and he confided to her his plans, relying upon her clear perceptions, good sense and womanly intuitions.

It was he who told Daisy of the manly, young farmer in Illinois, who had a home waiting for Lucy whenever she could be spared from her mother's home;—how their wedding had been deferred when the family came East, because Lucy would not leave her mother, who was

then in feeble health, to the care and labor incident to their removal and establishment in their new home;—with what faithful affection she had shared in her cares and lifted the burdens from her hands. Daisy had not looked for heroism nor romance in busy, practical Lucy. A bit of real life has so much unsuspected story and romance in it.



CHAPTER XI.

SETTLING INTO HER SPHERE.

DAISY, shall I find you here when I come back? ”

“I suppose so,” said she. Her lip trembled a little. One thing after another had kept her from realizing how her plans for the future were all gone. In the summer she had written to Helen that she would like to live there always. She could not bear to think of returning to school. Now, Nellie, her little pet, was buried on the hill - side, Harry was going to board in the village to attend school, coming home once a week, and Percy was about to leave them; life looked dull beyond.

The girls had already returned to Mrs. Lawrence. Geometry and French and composition were keeping them busy, and girlish spirits keeping them gay.

What should Daisy do? She had begun to think about it, and the prospect was unsatisfactory. Perhaps the young man had thought about it. Perhaps, out of a generous kindness to the girl and thoughtful consideration for the family, he had made a plan. Perhaps some other thought or feeling was hidden within. He did not explain his motives.

"Daisy, suppose you study Geography, History, French, and the Fine Arts with me?"

"With you? Why, you are going away!"

That is the very reason for it. You know the plan of our tour,—the places we shall visit and the things of interest in those places. It is not a mere pleasure tour for me. I am to make it profitable and instructive to the boys. It is a kind of educational trip to them, and, for that

matter, to me too. Suppose you study with us. You shall learn from books what we learn from sight - seeing, and we will compare notes as we go along. You know already more French and music and art than I do, and you shall supplement my superficial acquirements with your real acquisitions, and I will illustrate your books with pictures and scenes from real life and actual observation. Our letters shall be written in French, so they shall be more improving?"

Honest young man! Was he thinking how they would thus be Daisy's private property?

"But I have very few books here."

"That is no difficulty. My books are to be sent here next week for safe storage, until I am ready to set up my household goods again; and you may as well keep the moths out of them by looking into them occasionally."

Daisy's eyes sparkled. "Oh, I shall like that so much."

"The books?—and the French letters, too?"

"Yes," she answered, hesitatingly. "Only I shall not know what to write, nor how to say it well enough."

"Oh, yes, there is no trouble. You know we are to write about places and people and things that are famous. When you find anything of especial interest about any such thing, you can write it, or call my attention to something you would like to see, or tell me what you think of things."

"But it will take so much time, and perhaps mother will need me to do something for her. I could not be selfish when I see what Lucy has done."

"Mother will like it,—she will call it a good plan. She and father were saying, last night, how sorry they were that you could not return to Mrs. Lawrence and finish your studies; but this year is a pretty hard year, and father wants to do something for Lucy if she should be married this winter,"

" Lucy married this winter ! "

" Perhaps. You see father and mother think, now that they have you for a daughter, they must give up Lucy, so they are going to invite her to have a wedding to celebrate New Year. And they want to do what they can to make it a good beginning for her, she has been so good to all of us."

Daisy did not say anything for a few minutes. She was not very selfish, but she was not quite sure that she was ready to take a daughter's place in her father's family,—to do as Lucy had done. It was very pleasant to be a kind of visitor there, and give her services as free - will offerings,—to hold herself a little apart, and with gracious affability share in the every - day work. To make herself really one of them, and have all her services only simple duties for which none owed her thanks,—where the best that she could do would run up no credits for herself, and her failures be faults,—this was a different thing.

To find a plan already made, and her acquiescence taken for granted, took away all chance for generous offering on her part. It is so much easier to volunteer a kind action than to do the same thing when it is expected or demanded by others. She looked ahead a little, and saw herself no longer a child but a woman, with burdening care and responsibility, and the world a very common, work-day world. When she looked up, her eyes were full of tears. Percy did not understand her. He could not see how the young girl's life narrowed down to the "common round," the household task; and that what a daughter grows into naturally in her own home, would meet Daisy in a different way. Nothing in her life had fitted her for it, and she looked at all the hard side first.

Mr. and Mrs. Seymour had no thought of imposing care and work on Daisy. She might have trusted their thoughtful kindness, and Percy should have waited for the plans to work out

naturally, and find Daisy taking up unasked what lay before her.

Her tearful eyes embarrassed him. He could not think of anything to say that would not mean too little or too much, and was rather relieved when the boys rushed in boisterously and put an end to the conversation.

It was very dull for a few days after Percy's departure. Then Daisy's piano came. Mr. Seymour had bought it at the sale of her uncle's furniture, and after some delay it arrived at Hemlocks, greatly to Daisy's surprise and delight. And there was also a large box containing various household treasures and childish possessions, which her father had secured for her. There were a few books and pictures, a lovely Psyche, a little silver vase that used to stand on her aunt's dressing-table, filled with flowers which Daisy used to bring fresh every morning, and various little articles dear and sacred with home associations. She took a mournful pleasure in them,

and made the dear old piano the confident of many a sad hour.

Then came Percy's books, and she began a regular plan of study and reading, arranged with her mother for some part of the lighter household work as her daily care, and proposed to spend an hour a day with Dick and Robbie, beguiling them into some book-knowledge.

The autumn days set in with longer evenings, the family plans grew definite, another "girl" was hired, and Lucy was busy over webs of linen, dress patterns and trimmings. Quietly the family work dropped out of her hands, and with pre-occupied air she fashioned garments, or measured sheets and pillow-cases. The grain was harvested, the apples gathered, the corn husked, and things in-doors and out made ready for winter.

There were the golden October afternoons, with the dropping nuts and gay forest coloring, and then the dreamy days of the Indian summer,

with the falling leaves and biting winter frosts.

Can there be in nature anything more touching than the way in which the leaf goes to its grave? Think of the long preparation made for it in the summer, which it never knew; the care with which the hidden life was wrapped and protected through frost and snow; its joyful unfolding and expanding in the caressing air and vivifying sunshine of spring; the wonderful freshness, delicacy and beauty of its early life, when the birds were singing to it and the breezes rocking it in their embraces; and then the long midsummer days when it perfected into a richer color and firmer texture; in each season true to the plan of its life, never failing in the mysterious processes and important functions belonging to its own existence, and that of the tree of which it was a part. And it was only a leaf after all!

A change comes over it in the dreamy autumn days. The life current in its numberless veins

is clogged with foreign substances, its elements are changed, and it no longer brings vitality and strength. But instead of dull despair, the leaf clothes itself in bright hues, varying with each succeeding day in all possible combinations of color and shade, and after a while, its work all done, its life quite exhausted, it quietly separates itself from the tree, not dropping a dead, hopeless thing, but, floating airily down, it dallies with the zephyrs, turns now this side, now that, to catch the sunshine through its still bright tissues, till it touches softly the brown earth;—and then only,—decay. Its life is gone out forever. Its work is all done; and well done, too, and there is never anything more for the leaf.

Oh, what if human life were like this! Pretty leaves, floating down so lightly in the balmy air, do you know the beautiful, perfect life you have lived, and the sad, sad end that comes to it? And oh, Mother Earth, how can you take so coldly the delicate things that rest on your bosom?

Could you not fold them away where the careless foot or rough wind could never toss about their withered beauty?

Cold, unpitying Earth! Sometimes the tried heart longs to stretch itself on the green grass, clasp its arms about the trees, kiss the leaves, and fling itself into the embrace of our common mother. And this is the way you take back the beautiful things you sent out of your bosom in that bright spring-time! Is this the way you will meet us, your human children, when we pillow our heads on your breast and lie down to our long sleep under the green sod? Can human hearts bear that? How precious is one verse of the New Testament compared with all that nature reveals to us!



CHAPTER XII.

HEART - STRUGGLES.

TAKE care, father! That is Daisy's ware-house. She lays up goods all the week, and then goes to market Sunday and peddles them out at an astonishing advance on the original value. She has a long head at speculation."

"What do you mean, Harry?" Mr. Seymour stood by the table, a little paper in his hand from which he had torn a small piece. Daisy looked up from the other side of the room where she was presiding over the boys' spelling lesson.

"Look around in Sunday school next Sunday,

and see five pairs of eyes sticking out from five shining faces, fastened on the accents of Miss Hannah Seymour's tongue. And listen for a few minutes as she deals out the marvelous stories, where the good children all have sticks of candy and an extra piece of pie, or else die and go straight to heaven, while the naughty ones have to go to bed without their supper, and are sure to grow up and come to the gallows. And that pile of papers there is where she gets the stuff to make her long yarns."

"Why, Harry, what do you know about it?" exclaimed Daisy.

"Oh, our class is right the other side, and sometimes, when we get rather dull, I just listen to hear how you spin it out."

"For shame, Harry! As if I only told stories to amuse my little girls!"

"And is not that pretty much all you do?"

"No, indeed! I teach them a great deal, and try to help them to be good."

"You do, though? I suppose, then, the sermon part is rather dry, and do n't attract my notice."

"I am afraid your own lesson does not attract your notice much," said Mr. Seymour.

"You are too old, Harry, to be an inattentive, careless Sabbath school scholar."

"I think, sir, I am very attentive. I keep one ear turned to Mr. Clayton, and the other sharp on Daisy; so I take a double portion. You see, Daisy should not be so interesting."

The boy watched her flushed face a moment and then came around to her side.

"I beg your pardon, Daisy. I do like to hear your stories, and I can not help listening sometimes, and watching those faces that look as if they would devour you. But don't you think there should be a little more of the lesson and a little less of the story?"

As Harry went out, Daisy turned inquiringly to her father.

"Perhaps, my dear," said he, "we do some-

times mistake in trying to make the Sabbath school services so attractive, to the neglect of definite, practical religious instruction. We seek to entertain and interest the children for the passing hour, when our aim should be to do a stronger, better work."

"Miss Seymour, we have a young ladies' prayer-meeting at the parsonage every Friday afternoon, would you not like to come?"

The speaker was Mrs. Wingate, the minister's wife.

"Yes, if—I would not be expected to take any part?"

"Not if you are unwilling; but we are always glad to have all feel at home with us, and help sustain the meeting by some personal share in the service."

"Oh, I could not do that," said Daisy, quickly. Her thought went back to the little meet-

ings among the girls, where, even with her own school - mates, she could hardly trust her voice in prayer. And here among strangers she was sure she could not.

"But, my dear, we love the same Saviour, and have common hopes and common interests in this matter. Should not our sympathies in the same cause open our hearts to each other, that we may find mutual comfort and strength?"

"But, indeed, Mrs Wingate, I could not say a word. Please do n't ask me."

"Certainly, I will not press it on you. We shall be glad to see you, and you can help us sing, and perhaps you will feel it a privilege to say something for Christ, or give your witness to his love in a prayer. I can sympathize with your present feeling, for it was at first a great cross to me to take any active part in religious meetings. A ladies' prayer meeting was a great trial to me during the first year of my married life, but now I find it one of my best helps in spiritual strength

and enjoyment. I hope you may be led to see it in a new light."

Daisy thought about it during the next few days. Could she not overcome her shyness, and in the presence of others acknowledge her Saviour? A natural reticence in regard to her most sacred affections made her decide that it was not her duty to force her secret emotions into expression for others' ears, and that to pray in the presence of strangers would be only a mechanical utterance of words which would be a mockery. She was under no obligation to overcome the sacredness of private experience, or the delicacy of personal interests and emotions. She might attend the meeting, but she could take no part in the services.

She ventured to ask Lucy if she never went to the ladies' prayer-meeting. No, Lucy had been too much occupied with home cares to spare the time, and it was not often convenient for any one to harness the horse or go with her, as the men-

folks were generally busy ; but Daisy could go just as well as not. Now the wagon was always sent to the village Friday afternoon to take Harry home, and Mrs. Seymour was very glad to have Daisy go, and liked to have her form acquaintances and have common interests and sympathies with the young people.

So Daisy went to the prayer - meeting. At first it seemed formal and embarrassing to her, contrasted with the half - hour prayer circles at school, where everything was so natural, familiar and earnest. She joined in the singing, listened to the reading, and then, as one after another offered a prayer or spoke some brief word of counsel or comfort, or requested some special petition, she forgot that she was a stranger. She realized how much she had missed Christian sympathy and intercourse during these long weeks. Her heart was drawn out to those about her, her reserve melted away, and when the young lady who had charge of the meeting asked

her to make the closing prayer, after a moment's hesitation, she knelt down and offered her petitions with the sincerity, earnestness and devotion of a child at its mother's knee.

"Robbie, what are you doing?"

"Oh, Daisy! See our paper boats,—a whole navy of ships. Ain't they nice?"

"You naughty, naughty boys! Why did you meddle with my things? See; you have cut up my whole letter. Oh, what a plague you are!"

Robbie began to whimper, sobbing out,—
"The paper was all written over. I am sure it was n't good for anything."

"Not good for anything! When I spent all last week in writing it;—and now see here!"
And Daisy snatched up the little boats, pulling them mercilessly apart to pick out bits of the carefully written French sentences.

The boys began to scream and snatch at them.

"Be still, Daisy! Let our boats alone! You sha'n't touch them."

She rudely pushed away their little hands and swept off the fragments into her apron.

"Mistress of herself, though China fall!" said Harry, maliciously, from the other corner. He was always somewhere around when Daisy was tormented.

"Are you there, Harry? I should think you might have seen what they were doing."

"Seen what they were doing? Haven't I? They have been as still and happy as kittens this last hour, cutting up waste paper while I have been deep in Quadratic Equations. The most blessed boys I know of, to be so good and let their big brother study in peace. Come here, you darlings! You shall have a fleet as imposing as the Spanish Armada. Much you know about that, but it was tremendous. Here are

sheets of paper with x's and y's flying about over them like shot and shell from men of war,—a thousand times prettier than Daisy's sweeps and flourishes."

The boys were soon comforted and busy again, while Daisy looked over her bits of paper despairingly. Her temper cooled a little, and she began to be ashamed. Poor little fellows! she thought. They did not know what they were doing. I should not have left it here. It was not their fault so much as mine.

Harry looked across at her. "It seems to me I should not keep my valuable literary productions lying around loose for the little barbarians to destroy."

"Oh, do n't, Harry! I am mortified and vexed, and Percy will be so disappointed. I shall not have time to write another letter for this mail, and I have not missed once before since he went away. It is too bad." And the tears came into her eyes.

Harry whistled. "I should think you might write a little note in sensible English. I guess Percy would n't mind it if the French was left out."

"But that is just what we write for,—for the French, and the study in other things."

"Oh, it is?" And Harry lifted his eye - brows. "Well, it is very provoking, Daisy. These little shavers have done a vexatious mischief; but I tell you, I will write to Percy and tell him all about it. He will be glad of a description of a home-scene done in plain English."

"No, no, Harry. Do n't do that;" and Daisy's cheeks crimsoned at the thought of Harry's repeating to Percy the story of her vexation and cross words to the boys.

"You do n't seem disposed to let a friend help you out of your trouble, so I will go on and complete my square."

Daisy did feel very much ashamed of herself; at first, chiefly because it was so unlady-like to

get into a passion about anything. But when, at tea, Robbie began to tell his father how "hopping mad Daisy was at him and Dicky; just as mad as fire," and then at bed-time, when he said his prayers, and, in his childish way, remembered all the family, asking God to "forgive Daisy because she had been a bad girl, and was cross to him when he did n't mean to do any harm,"—she felt the difference between mortification over an unlady-like act and sorrow for a wrong one.

The correspondence with Percy was a source of great interest and pleasure. She had carried out faithfully the proposed plan of study, consulting maps, reading from books of travel, studying history and art till she felt quite familiar with the places which the travelers visited. London and Paris, the old German towns, Swiss lakes and mountains, Rome and Florence, were no longer like far-off places, only dreamed of. They were real and full of living interest. In the quiet New England home, she learned many things of those

foreign places that Percy and his pupils overlooked in their rapid tour.

Percy's letters, it must be confessed, were often hastily written in unscholarly French. His days were so crowded with interests, there was so much to fill his time and thoughts, that he performed his part of the agreement less faithfully. The days passed so rapidly with him, that Daisy's letters came before he looked for them;—there was no waiting and anticipation, and the time for him to answer always took him by surprise. She looked forward, counting the days before his letters were due, and gave study, heart and time to her replies.

If a quiet, monotonous life looks to an observer dull and common-place, from its few objects of interest and little variety in work or pleasure, a closer acquaintance will show him that those few objects assume a greater importance and yield a richer enjoyment from their rarity. Everything is full of meaning, and has unsuspected

possibilities hidden in it. If we turn it over and over, and look at it with eyes not already full of other images, we find the shapeless lump full of shining gold. The lives that we call dull, may press a richer sweetness and more delicate flavor out of their vintage than others, in their busy hurry, ever tastè, though their vineyards may be large and their vines laden with heavy clusters.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE REVIVAL.

THERE was an unusual interest in the subject of religion among the people at the village. It was seen first in an awakening of new earnestness and faithfulness in the church. The prayer-meetings were better attended; there were more to take a part in the services; a sense of personal unworthiness, a spirit of devotion, and brotherly love, and mourning over unfaithfulness, characterized the prayers and exhortations; the congregation grew larger upon the Sabbath; there was an earnest, breathless attention to the preacher, a solemn hush during the prayers, and the minister's lips seemed

touched anew with a coal of fire. The Sabbath school grew larger, the pupils showed a deeper interest in religious truth, and an air of greater solemnity pervaded the classes. Here and there an inquirer began to ask,—“What shall I do to be saved?” The special meetings for prayer were appointed and fully attended, evening sermons were preached to large congregations, and a precious season of revival gathered increasing numbers among the converts. Many Sabbath school scholars and students at the Academy came out on the Lord’s side.

Daisy’s solicitude and prayers for Harry were unceasing and earnest; but, so far from showing a deepening interest, he manifested an unusual opposition to the whole subject, was petulant and bristling at the slightest approach to personal conversation, and set himself with a kind of obdurate defiance against any influence that might touch him. His father waited with a grieved patience to see a different spirit, and not without hope;

for he recognized, under the boy's assumed indifference or bitter antagonism, a resistance and struggle which shook his whole nature. The mother watched her son with intense yearning and anxiety. He lingered about her sometimes as if to shelter himself in her quiet reticence. His irritation and recklessness seemed to soothe themselves in her presence, as if he felt security from a direct attack, and was sure of a tacit understanding of his real feelings.

The hired man and one of the domestics already hoped they had become Christians, and each evening there were some of the family to go to the meetings at the church, which continued to increase in interest.

"Harry, won't you go with us to-night?" said Lucy, as she was fastening her tippet one evening.

"No, indeed!" said he, brusquely. "It is enough to have all the rest of the heads turned. I shall look out and not risk mine there."

"But, Harry"——

"You need n't 'but Harry' me," he interrupted. "I sha'n't go;" and he slammed the door as he went out.

"What is the matter with Harry?" said she, turning to her mother. "He never used to speak so."

"When the Spirit of God strives with man, all the evil in the heart is stirred up in resistance. We can not comprehend the strength of the sinner's opposition, nor the working of God's grace, only as we see it in our own hearts. We must wait and pray," said Mrs. Seymour, and her voice sounded as though there was a tear in it.

Two evenings later, Harry had been unusually helpful to finish the "night - chores," so that the rest could go to meeting when Mr. P—— was expected to preach. The family were starting off, except Mary, who stayed to keep house, and Harry, to whom no one had spoken about going. Just as the wagon was starting, Harry called out,

"Hold on ! I believe I will go along down to the village. I want to see some of the boys about getting up a skating party for next week, and I have a few little errands to do. I shall about get around by the time you are through preaching and praying;" and he swung himself into the back of the wagon behind his mother.

"You had better come to meeting with us, Harry," said she.

"Not I. I am afraid it will catch me if I go there. It is bad enough to be prayed about; save me from being prayed at."

"Bad enough !"

"Yes, to be sure. Here is Daisy looking beseechingly after me, as if I had a halter around my neck and was just ready to be swung off, and all the rest of you watching me anxiously as if I was going straight to the bad, when I don't see as I am any worse than I have been all along. I think it is real mean to set up a fellow as a mark to fire all your pious shots at."

"Harry, shall we stop praying for you, and leave you to go your own way?"

"What good does your praying do? Ain't I going my own way in spite of it? How will you help it?"

"God can help it. He can turn the hearts of the children of men even as the rivers of water are turned. His Spirit can follow you when you try to escape from Him."

"Then why should I not wait until He does it? What is there for me to do?"

His mother was silent. She knew that argument would not satisfy a rebellious heart.

Mr. Seymour turned to Harry. "Why do you sow the grain in the spring? You can not make it grow. Why do you plan to do anything? Why do you ever persevere in effort to accomplish your plans? Why don't you wait for God to do it all for you?"

"Because He won't do it for me, and I can do it myself,—at least I can do some things."

"Is the God who saves the soul a different Being from the One who does all other things? Do His attributes and the laws of your being change in the work of conversion, and remain the same under all other circumstances?"

"But I do n't see how it is that you pray to Him that He should make me a Christian, and then talk to me as if I must do it myself."

"Very well. Do you see why you should ask,—'Give us this day our daily bread,' and then go to work to get it yourself? Why do you set scions in your apple trees? You can not start life in a single twig? Why do you plan for next week's skating? There are a thousand contingencies incident to it, utterly beyond your power? If your dependence on God does n't paralyze your will and restrain your efforts in other matters, why should it in this? That difficulty does n't trouble you in any other direction. The great facts of God's being and attributes, as Creator and Governor of ourselves and the whole universe,

and our relations to Him as finite creatures whom He has made, who derive all things from Him and hold all things according to His sovereign will,—these facts are constant and unchangeable. Just so far as they excuse us from responsibility and endeavor in any other direction,—just so far as they restrain our freedom, coerce our choice and make all effort useless, in common, practical matters,—just so far do they in religious experience, and no farther. God moves us through natural influences as well as through the direct agency of the Spirit. It is the same God working in a different way. ‘Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning.’

“When the soul recognizes its dependence on God, it does not create the fact of its dependence. It is just as difficult for you to reconcile what God does for you and what you do for yourself, in the simplest things of every day life, as in this

serious and all - important matter. Why do n't you stop all effort in such things, and sit down idle, purposeless and inert till you are sure that God moves you, or till you settle the question of the exact limits of finite and infinite power and responsibility? Why do you ignore all apparent contradictions and difficulties in reconciling human will and human effort with the divine sovereignty, in the comparatively unimportant choices, plans and acts of life, and then make them an insuperable objection in this momentous question which involves your eternal happiness? Do you not feel here the same freedom of choice, the same power and responsibility? Do you not exercise the same natural abilities, though turned more directly towards the Infinite One, though mysteriously moved by His gracious Spirit? Oh, my dear Harry, is it not God who says,—'Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?' and 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out?'"

Mr. Seymour spoke earnestly, solemnly and

affectionately. Harry was silent. As they drove into the village, he jumped out at the street corner and went down to the Post Office. Mrs. Seymour sighed. She had hoped that he would, after all, go to the meeting.

The evening sermon was simple, instructive and impressive, founded on the story of the prodigal son. It seemed as if the sinner's heart must be melted and drawn to the loving Father. After the sermon, an opportunity was given for for any to give testimony to what God had done for them, request prayers, or make confession of their sense of sinfulness. One after another had thus spoken, and several prayers had been offered, when some one arose in a distant part of the church, near the door, and with a voice choked with emotion, said : " I feel that I am a prodigal son. I wish to return to my Father, to confess to Him that I have sinned against heaven and in His sight, and am no more worthy to be called a son ; and I am ready to be the poorest servant if

He will receive me. Pray for me, that I may find the way to Him,—that He may forgive me and receive me.”

The speaker sat down. There was a moment of breathless silence, and then Mr. Wingate offered a short, fervent prayer for the returning penitent, the scarcely repressed feelings of hearts that thrilled with joy akin to that of the angels over a repenting sinner, bearing up his petitions with the fullness and strength of Christian sympathy and faith.

How that voice made the hearts of the Seymour family bound with surprise and gratitude! With what swelling emotions they joined in the prayers? It was Harry, their Harry, who was seeking the way to his Father's house.

As the meeting closed and he came forward to join the inquirers gathering around the altar, he grasped Mr. Seymour's hand and, stout youth as he was; dropped his head a moment on his mother's shoulder, whispering,—“It was your prayers

that did it. I could not get away from them. I have tried to fight them off, but they brought me here. Pray always for me."

That night, on their return from meeting, Harry brought the Bible to his father for the evening worship, and after the reading, Mr. Seymour bowed in prayer,—his hand on Harry's shoulder, as he knelt by his side,—gave thanks for God's great goodness, and made intercession with the Father for this repentant son. And then the mother, and one after another, each member of the family, offered their petitions, sometimes broken and choked with tears, but full of Christian joy and faith; and at last Harry himself, in broken sentences, gave himself to God in entire surrender and consecration. While he was yet a great way off, his Father had met him and brought him home with rejoicing.

And in that marvelous revelation of God in his soul,—that most mysterious and wonderful operation of the divine Spirit upon the human nature,

—the work of regeneration, wherein the free choice of the sinner and the agency of the Holy Spirit are so distinctly recognized and sharply defined, yet so wondrously blended,—that new creation where he is told,—“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,”—the inquiry never once came into his mind, “How can these things be?” He realized them as an actual fact in his experience, but did not attempt to analyze his faith, discriminate between the steps of the process, or reconcile the great questions involved. “For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”



CHAPTER XIV.

FACING RESPONSIBILITY.

FEBRUARY had come, with its longer days and the promise of spring in its more generous sunshine. Winter had passed very quietly at Hemlocks, but the days had been neither idle nor monotonous. Too far removed from the village to participate freely in the social enjoyments, they had yet their share of company and visiting. During the summer, country hospitality is generally taxed with visitors from the city, and there is less time and opportunity for intercourse among neighbors. Cold weather drives away the summer visitors, and work presses less heavily on the

household. Cut off from out-door occupation and enjoyment, the earth itself shrouded in snow, and the air forbidding, the people turn to human sympathy and companionship. The long evenings quicken the social instincts and give leisure to gratify them.

Daisy had formed some very pleasant acquaintances. She had been surprised to find girls of education and refinement in the country village, though, in the freedom of social intercourse, she was often annoyed by the coarse manners and gossiping criticism of ill-bred girls, who, with vacant minds and uncultivated tastes, were continually engrossed in petty jealousies, officious meddling, impertinent curiosity and foolish or malicious scandal. It is a sad thing to see a young girl whose mind and heart run to waste.

Daisy was rather a favorite among the young people. Her pretty face and winning ways attracted notice and admiration. She had vivacity

and playfulness enough to be agreeable, and was intelligent and sympathetic enough to be companionable. She might have been quite a belle, had she not had too much character and delicacy to stoop to coquetry or trifling. Young men found various devices for driving out to Hemlocks, when they lacked courage to make a formal call on Daisy. Sometimes they had business with Mr. Seymour, or an errand with Harry,—both business and errand hardly warranting the trouble of a visit, and apparently forgotten when they were courteously invited to stay and spend the evening. Lucy's acquaintances were anxious to make the most of the time during which she would be with them, and to see her often before they lost her from the place, and Harry had very many friends among the young men. It was astonishing that a boy of his age could be so enjoyable to those of maturer years. It was amazing to see how one young lawyer, in particular, patronized him. If

Daisy was aware of the little by - play and subterfuge of these informal evening visits, she did not betray it, though Harry used to talk very demurely about his dear friends who always happened to get into such an interesting talk with Daisy that they had to come again to see him.

Lucy's wedding had been put off a little. Now it was to take place the next week. Mr. Vorsten was to come to - morrow, and Percy might be expected any day, as the steamer in which he sailed was already due. Lucy was to have a quiet family wedding, yet there had been great preparations for it. The whole house had been renovated and put in freshest order. All the family, down to Robbie and Dicky, had their new suit of clothes for the occasion. Lucy's wardrobe and housekeeping outfit had finally been finished and packed. The hurry and bustle of preparation subsiding, there was a day or two of breathing time and anticipation. Lucy lingered over

the familiar tasks and around the family scenes with softened tenderness, and Mrs. Seymour's eyes followed her with wistful love.

But the wedding was not in Daisy's thought to - night. She had been studying her Sabbath school lesson, and was now writing in her journal.

When she commenced her journal at school, Mrs. Lawrence had once said to her: "Record thoughts and facts more than feelings, and be sure and tell the truth. It is well to examine ourselves, question our motives, write out our good resolutions, or make mention of God's special goodness to us; yet, to study too continually the workings of our own hearts, and record all our emotional experience, induces a morbid self-consciousness; while the Christian should constantly endeavor to be less occupied with self and more filled with God. We become better, not by dwelling on our own weakness and sinfulness, but on God's character and love to us; by look-

ing towards Christ, not into the darkness and sin of our own souls.

“And we are in great danger of coloring, exaggerating or intensifying any account of our religious struggles, temptations or victories. It is not easy to be perfectly honest, and strictly truthful in recording any experience exactly as it is. The mere effort to clothe it in words may soften or strengthen a feeling. We should always endeavor to tell the exact truth about ourselves when speaking to ourselves.”

Daisy's Journal was more a history of her life, a record of her thoughts and opinions on subjects to which her attention was directed from day to day, than a report of her spiritual growth; yet, as she endeavored to bring her whole life under the influence of Christian principle, to live day by day nearer to her Saviour, to have her heart more filled with love to Him and her conduct more entirely guided by his Spirit, any record made of her daily life, must embody some-

thing of these religious aspirations and aims, some self-communing and self-condemnation, some considerations of duty, some precious experience of heavenly blessing.

To-night she was oppressed with a sense of neglected duty in her shrinking from personal effort to win others to Christ, especially with reference to her Sabbath school class. The Sabbath school had increased in numbers during the winter, and so many new classes had been formed that it was difficult to obtain satisfactory teachers, and various changes were made to meet the wants of the school. Daisy's class of little girls had been transferred to another teacher, and she had been induced to take charge of a class of older pupils, girls of fourteen or fifteen years of age. She had great hesitation in assuming such a responsibility, and had found the duty even more trying than she anticipated. Two of the girls had become Christians during the revival, but the others were giddy and thoughtless. They had

been drawn into the school because "everybody went," and the novelty and excitement attracted them for a while. They were from respectable but irreligious families, they were ignorant of the Bible, and their characters seemed wholly lacking in the religious element. Daisy found it difficult to interest them in the lesson, or even keep their attention. They were ready to gaze about, whisper and laugh when she was making the greatest effort to impress some truth upon them.

She could pray for them, make faithful preparation for her lesson, and work with Christian fidelity in the Sabbath instruction; but to approach them personally with a direct inquiry, an appeal, or a word of affectionate entreaty, seemed impossible to her. She shrank from intruding into the sacred privacy of any hidden life, breaking over the barrier of reserve which one instinctively raises between the heart and the world, and forcing herself into the unwilling confidence

of another. Yet the more earnest her interest for their salvation, the more urgent was her feeling that she should make some personal effort in their behalf. Her prayers were burdened by the consciousness that she was leaving a part of her work undone. The last Sabbath, Ellen Saxton, who was generally the most troublesome one in the class, had been unusually quiet and attentive, and Daisy had felt prompted once or twice to speak with her personally, but had let the opportunity pass unimproved. To - night she had made this entry in her journal :

"I have been considering a point of suggested duty. Either it is my duty, or it is not. I must decide the question. A state of uncertainty is neither right nor wise. If it is not my duty, I dismiss it at once ; if it is my duty, I must do it. Yet why should I call it a duty ? Is it not a privilege to do something for my Saviour ? Should I not be grateful if He will let me do something in His cause ?

And if I love the souls of others, and believe that only Christ can save them, how can I help finding ways to express that interest and commend that Saviour to them! Yet I am such an imperfect Christian myself, that I am quite unfit to present Christ to others. I am afraid to see my own hand-writing on another's spiritual nature. To meddle or tamper with the wonderfully sensitive tissues of the human soul is such a fearful thing in its far-reaching results. I dare only use God's truth in a simple, earnest way, without even the finger weight of human touch to send it home.

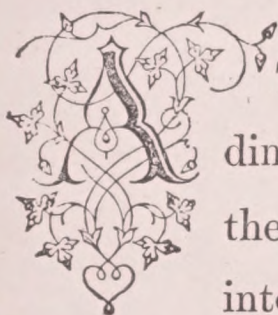
"But I must be wrong in that. I am exerting an influence on other souls, whether intentionally or not. Should I not endeavor to use for God the power which I constantly use without aim or will? If I were a better Christian, I should not be afraid of direct effort. How can one become better except by trying to do present duty? Does not the best prepara-

tion for a work sometimes lie in the willingness to do it? Do we not become fitted for the work by actually doing it? And we are to show Christ to others; not hold up ourselves. But I have so little of Him; so much of myself! So every way I find my need of Him; all Christian effort draws me nearer to Him."



CHAPTER XV.

THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN'S DEATH.



T last Percy had come; the wedding was over; Lucy was gone; and the family was settling down again into its ordinary ways; though Percy's presence, with the charm and interest of his traveling experience, added new and enlivening elements to the family circle.

One morning a message was left for Daisy. "Would Miss Seymour please to call at Mrs. Saxton's? Miss Ellen was dangerously sick, and wished very much to see her Sabbath school teacher."

How it startled Daisy. In the excitement and

busy occupation of the last three weeks, she had almost forgotten other anxieties and interests. Ellen was absent from her class the last Sabbath, and, on inquiry, she learned that she was sick. She had fully intended to make further inquiries, and call upon her if the illness continued, but had neglected to do so during the week. It was now Saturday, and this was the first intelligence she had received from her. Her father happened to be going to the village, and he took her there at once. Mrs. Saxton met her kindly, but with an anxious, tearful face. Yes, Ellen was very, very sick. The doctor said she could not recover, and might live but a few days.

They led her to the sick room. What a change this brief time had wrought ! The gay girl, whose blooming face and boisterous spirits had mocked at disease and sorrow, could hardly be recognized in the poor sufferer bolstered on the pillows in the darkened room.

“Miss Seymour, I am going to die, and I

wanted to ask you to forgive me for being so inattentive and rude to you in the Sabbath school class. I am very sorry that I treated you so, and I thank you for your patience, and what you taught me about the Saviour."

"My dear Ellen, your want of courtesy to me was nothing compared with your indifference and ingratitude to the Saviour. Have you asked him to forgive you?"

"Yes, Miss Seymour. I wanted to tell you about that, too. Several Sundays ago, you were talking to us about the Saviour's love; something made me pay more attention than usual; and all at once it came into my mind as something real,—as if I had never heard of it before. I began to see that there was something true and of very solemn interest in the things that I had heard so often like idle words. It was as if some new power had taken hold of me, and made me see and feel a fearful reality in life and death, heaven and hell, my own soul and God. I seemed

almost to see the Saviour, and oh, how grieved He looked towards me. And then I began to see what I was,— what I had been doing all my life, — and the more I thought of it, the more I realized what a poor, sinful, lost creature I was, and how holy and just God was. I had nobody to talk to,—nobody to help me; and I was very wretched. I thought I would ask you the next Sunday to tell me something. The lesson was about the Omniscience of God, and I felt His all-seeing eye looking me through and through till it seemed to burn into my soul with a blaze of light. How I trembled and loathed myself under that gaze! That only increased my distress. I waited a moment to speak with you after the school was dismissed, but you were occupied with your friends, and I came home utterly wretched, left hopeless by God and man.

“ In the evening I went to church again, and Mr. Wingate preached about the condition and prospects of the sinner,— ‘without God and without

hope in the world.' Every way I turned, these terrible facts were driven home to my distressed heart. I knew all that; I wanted to find some way out of it. Why would nobody show me what to do? I could not bear it any longer.

"After meeting I went to see Mr. Wingate. Before that, I had kept my feelings to myself. I thought the girls would laugh at me; but now I did not care if all the world laughed at me. I must do something. I don't know how it was. Mr. Wingate did not say very much to me. He read several verses from the Bible,—verses that I had heard a great many times, but did not see much meaning in them. Now, how new they were to me,—as if God had just spoken them to me. And then he prayed with me;—then, I can not tell you how it was, but my eyes were opened. It was all there before, but I did not see it,—that God loved me,—that the Saviour was waiting to have me take Him as my Saviour. It did not come at once. My own heart looked

as bad as before, but I no longer wished to hide myself from the sight of God. Jesus drew me towards Him, and I came, feeling that He could save me from myself. I was so helpless that I could do nothing; but He was ready to do it all.

“And, Miss Seymour, I think He has forgiven me. The very next day I began to be sick, and I could not think much. I feel very ignorant about such things. Sometimes in the terrible pain it seemed as though I could not remember anything, or know anything. And there is a great deal I do n’t know and ought to know, but Jesus knows it all, and I trust it all to Him. I just lie here and feel sure that He will take care of me, and so I do n’t try to understand it. I only just take hold of His hand, which He stretches out to me, and leave all the rest to Him. When I think about dying, I am afraid. I am so sorry to leave father and mother, and all I love, and all the pleasant things here. Oh, it is so pleasant to live! And I am so young! But when I think

about my Saviour, and the home where I am going, where I shall not sin any more, and shall see Him and enjoy Him always, I am not afraid nor sorry. Oh, no ; I am very safe in His care,—very safe.”

And Ellen paused, with a look of sweet trust on her face as if she were saying it over and over to herself, dwelling lovingly on the precious thought.

She had talked on hurriedly, often interrupted by coughing, want of breath, or paroxysms of pain. Daisy had listened almost speechless,—awe-stricken in the presence of one on the borders of the dark valley, and her utterance choked with her over-powering emotions. The grateful, joyous surprise in finding her wayward pupil rejoicing in the Christian hope, was followed by a remorseful sense of loss, in remembering that God had given her an opportunity to have a part in this work, and she had neglected it. Yet none the less had He carried on His work, finding other

instruments to do His will, other means to accomplish His plans. He had not needed her; He could do without her unwilling service; but she had lost a precious privilege of sharing in the blessed work of leading a soul back to Him.

Sitting there by Ellen's bedside, the pupil became the teacher. Ellen asked her to sing a hymn that would suit her; and with voice that trembled at first, and then steadied itself as the spirit of the hymn grew strong in her heart, she sang:

“Rock of Ages! cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!
Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side that flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,—
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

“Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone!
In my hand no price I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling.

“While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death;

When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on thy judgment throne,—
Rock of Ages! cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

"Oh, thank you, Miss Seymour," said Ellen, with radiant face; "and now there is another one, about covering my head with the shadow of His wing; won't you sing that?" So Daisy sang on:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the waters near me roll,
While the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide;
Oh, receive my soul at last!

"Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on thee;
Leave, ah! leave me not alone;
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed,
All my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of thy wing."

The singing seemed to quiet her restlessness and soothe her pain. She lay silent for some-time, as if she were filling her soul with the

blessedness of that sure refuge, and then she asked Daisy to pray with her. The mother had been sitting by, listening and ministering to the wants of her suffering child. Daisy glanced towards her. "Yes, Miss Seymour, if it will do her any good; she has begged me to pray for her, and I can't. But you can;" and the poor woman burst into tears. The prayer caught up the spirit of the hymns, and brought them into the conscious presence of the Saviour, in whose love His sinful children may hide with unwavering faith.

As Daisy left, Ellen begged her to "come again, if ——" and she paused a moment; ah, the solemn uncertainty of that "if"—"if I should live a few days longer," she added, with a steady voice and bright eye.

She lived several days after that interview, and Daisy saw her twice. She found her always with the same unshaken trust in the Saviour, resting in Him with childlike confidence. Daisy looked

to see in her a more vivid realization of the mysterious and untried scenes upon which she was entering, for a more eager anticipation and triumphant rejoicing in the prospect, and for a more anxious interest in the salvation of her impenitent friends. She did, indeed, talk with affectionate solicitude to her father and mother, charging her younger brothers and sisters to study the Bible and love the Saviour, and left messages for her young friends ; but to Daisy, looking out with the steady gaze of strong life and health into the world beyond, there came such an overpowering sense of the solemn reality of death, such a vivid conception of the great change, that she thought that, if she were lying there, expecting each day to enter upon those scenes, her whole being would be absorbed in the prospect before her,—that all she believed and hoped for would be quickened into intense activity and rapturous anticipation. She thought it would be impossible for her to lie there quietly and calmly, drifting out from the familiar

shore upon the mysterious, boundless ocean. She did not know how disease and suffering may deaden the shock, and soften the startling vividness with which death and life confront each other ; that the sick bed often makes an unconscious transition from the known and visible to the unknown and invisible ; and that, through the slow dissolution of the body, the soul feels its way obscurely into the realms beyond the senses. And she did not know how various are the dealings of God with His children ; through what new and fresh experiences He leads them home, each in his own path, but all in the same direction.

After days of great suffering, the struggle and the pain ceased, and Ellen died as peacefully as a child shuts its eyes to sleep.

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
He will not, he will not desert to its foes ;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
He'll never, no, never, no, never forsake.”



CHAPTER XVI.

IN A NEW SPHERE.

IN THE spring, Daisy took up new duties and responsibilities. The Principal of the academy was taken ill just before the commencement of the spring term, and the trustees applied to Percy Willard to take his place. He accepted the situation for one quarter, intending then to take up his professional studies. The school opened with an unusually large number of pupils, warranting the employment of additional teachers, to afford better facilities for their improvement. No instruction had previously been given in music, and the French had been taught by one of the

gentlemen teachers, who had the average knowledge gained by young men in their college course. Percy proposed to Daisy that she take charge of the French classes and give lessons in music. She would have been unwilling to take such a task on her own responsibility or with strangers, but it was quite a different affair to work with Percy, depending on his judgment and support, sure of his co-operation and sympathy. When in school, she excelled in music and French, and was very well fitted, from previous study and practice under fine teachers, to give instruction in those departments.

She commenced her duties with great energy and enthusiasm, though with some diffidence. Though not quite eighteen years of age, and very youthful in manner and appearance, she had a real dignity of character, steadiness and self-reliance which inspired a degree of confidence and respect. She had grown more womanly, improved in practical judgment and ready

tact, so that she could adapt herself more easily to persons and circumstances. She was glad to do something for her own support, to relieve her father from an added burden, and glad to do it for the pleasure of doing.

A healthy condition of body and mind makes the exercise of one's powers a positive enjoyment. There is an excitement in devising and executing plans, a consciousness of power in accomplishing difficult undertakings, a satisfaction arising from congenial occupations and intelligent activity, a pleasure in making one's self useful, which create a healthful glow through the whole being, like the bloom on the cheek and the bounding flow of the vigorous blood.

The care and work might have overtasked her strength, but the drives to and from school, as they boarded at home, made her fresh to take up the school-room duty in the morning, and lifted the burdens before she reached home at night. She did not find teaching an unalloyed pleasure.

There was dry and tiresome work connected with it. Some of her pupils were slow and dull, some were idle and careless, and her enthusiasm was often damped and her patience severely tried by the lack of appreciation and response where her efforts had been tireless and earnest. But she accomplished much for her pupils, and still more for herself. The experience was an intellectual gain, but more valuable in its effect in strengthening and developing her character.

Percy was surprised at her success. He had no doubt as to her scholarship. He knew she was fully competent for all the work required of her, and was confident she would make herself a successful and popular teacher; but he had expected to sustain her by his authority; he thought she would depend on his advice, and refer cases of discipline to his decision. Instead of that, she not only sustained herself in her own department with a degree of independence and executive ability, but her observation and judgment

were invaluable to him in managing the general interests of the school. It was he who consulted her on matters of greater and less importance, not she who was referring to him constantly. In truth, she aroused little antagonism on the part of her pupils. She was pleasing in appearance and winning in manners, and was herself so interested in the study, and so sincere and earnest in her efforts for the progress of her scholars, that insubordination was disarmed, stupidity roused, and indifference excited to attention and industry.

With the boys, where she expected most trouble, she found no difficulty. A chivalrous admiration for herself, and the generous honor which even the roughest manliness renders to the sweet grace of womanhood, saved her from uncomfortable collisions with coarse and lawless boys, while she was the constant recipient of thoughtful attentions and pleasant courtesies from the more scholarly and appreciative. Her only trouble was with uncultured, undisciplined girls

near her own age. She did have worries and perplexities and discouragements in her relations with them. At first she was inclined to carry these troubles to Percy, ask him what to do and leave the discipline in his hands; but she wisely concluded that, if she could not concentrate her energies and create elements of force sufficient to influence and control the minds brought under her care, her weakness would be a great drawback to her usefulness in her work, and a source of conscious lack and mortification to her self-respect. She roused herself to a stronger and more vigorous tone of mind, studied a wiser choice of means, observed more carefully the results of different methods, and adapted her efforts to individual temperament and disposition. She did not always succeed, for she was too young and ignorant of human nature not to make mistakes and failures;—what promised so much in theory she could not realize in fact. Her plans were too often formed for ideal pupils. It was

easy to manage these in her own thought; but the pupils in her classes were often stubborn realities, doing the very things that she had never calculated upon, and placing her in the most unexpected positions. But she fought her way through many difficulties, learning from her mistakes, and developing a silent strength and latent power not apparent in her gentle, attractive manners, but sure to be felt in any demand for their exercise.

Harry was an invaluable counselor and friend. His gay spirits often effervesced in boyish fun, and his sharp eyes and merry tongue found inexhaustible sources of frolic; but his honest, frank manliness, clear perceptions, correct judgment and unswerving Christian principles made him judicious, quick-sighted and trustworthy. It was surprising to see how often Percy depended on his opinion and practical knowledge. The older youth had not wholly shaken off the dreaminess and morbid sensibility of his boyhood.

The ideal tendencies of his character refined but sometimes weakened the stronger forces. His swarming thoughts and fancies confused his vision, and the susceptibility of his emotional nature warped his judgment.

Harry's fearless, Christian faithfulness was a constant lesson to those about him. He never seemed to doubt and question in reference to duty. Right and wrong were clearly defined to him, and whatever it cost, he accepted the decisions of his conscience as final and authoritative. His faults were those of a decided, courageous, outspoken disposition. Weak indecision, cowardice, meanness, falsehood and cunning could not be comfortable under the keen, withering expression of his eye. Unconsciously he was often a rebuke to another. There was such a healthy vitality in his piety that a weaker growth or deformed, one-sided development was put to shame when brought in contrast with it. Whether it was the invigorating effect of Harry's character,

the indirect influence of Daisy's conception of a man's noblest work, or the result of his own independent deliberations and sense of duty, Percy decided to consecrate himself to the work of the ministry, and enter upon his theological studies at the beginning of the next seminary term.

The summer was a delightful vacation. Daisy made herself useful in household duties, and Percy and Harry shared in the farm work, but not with the dull pressure of necessity and unremitting toil. The day's work was framed in a golden border, and the hours of labor were bright in a rich and beautiful setting.



CHAPTER XVII.

NEW AND HIGHER THOUGHTS.

NOW Daisy has changed since she left school; do n't you think so? I should suppose she was a dozen years older. What has she done to herself?"

"I do n't see as she is so different. You forget that her uncle and aunt have died, and then, after she came here, her little sister sickened, and she lost her property, and her life is not at all like what it was at school. She has had a good many things to make her feel older and soberer, though I find her pretty much the same Daisy."

"What puzzles me, is, that the very things that I thought would make her different, don't seem to have affected her. I expected to find her pensive and interesting, with a kind of shadow hanging about her, as if she carried a grief in her heart that she did not talk about; as if she suffered, but was very patient and heroic over it. And I thought she would have a kind of princess air among these country people. But she seems as contented as if she had everything she wanted, as fresh and lively as if nobody ever died, and as unaffected and genuine in her regard for these people as if she never was in any better circumstances or lived with any more stylish folks. She do n't even wear mourning."

"Then in what respect is she so different."

"Well, I can't exactly tell. She seems so much older, though she do n't look so. She do n't have any nonsense about her. I feel more like behaving myself when she is around; and as for playing jokes on her, as I used to at school, I

declare, wouldn't my hair stand on end at the dignified astonishment she would look at such a girlish escapade? I believe it is living so long without girls. Among these sensible people, she don't get her wits shaken up; she don't ferment into silly frolic and effervesce into foaming nonsense. I tell you, there is nothing that keeps the sparkle in one like having mischief brewing about you all the time," and the merry girl twitched the long locks of her companion, danced about her, caught her around the waist and swung her off in a giddy whirl about the room.

"O Mary! Don't! Percy Willard's room is right opposite, and he will think we are having a regular boarding school frolic. Do let us behave ourselves properly. I hate to be reckoned as a hoydenish girl whose good time is made up of underhand play and plots and mischief."

"So it is Percy Willard's good opinion we must earn by proper behavior? Well, he is a

handsome fellow, worth an effort in any line, though I should rather try any other track than the "proper" one. Sit down and make up your most fascinating crimps; but it is my private opinion that your raven locks will never catch in their meshes the heart that is fast prisoned in Daisy Seymour's golden curls. I have noticed that such serious, intellectual young men, with their grand airs of superior judgment and sense, are apt to be caught by a pretty face and charming manners, or even by a little piquant nonsense. Now, I beg your pardon, but you are entirely too good and sensible and practical to stir this gallant knight with a single heart flutter. I should succeed better myself. My madcap ways would shock him at first, but he would soon get over that, and I should dash into the charge in such unexpected places and with such daring plunges, that he would be compelled to notice me and think about me. I have a mind to try. Would n't a flirtation with him be splendid?"

"Mary, are you not ashamed of yourself? A girl of your sense and good breeding to talk about getting up a flirtation, in that style! I hope you have more womanliness and refinement than to set yourself deliberately even to think in that way."

"Most worthy and well-beloved cousin! I humbly beg your forgiveness for my shocking un-womanliness, but I will leave it to the court to decide, if you have not spent the last fifteen minutes in putting up your hair for a charming fringe of curls and a fascinating mass of wavy bands, and the thought of Percy Willard has twisted itself in and out among the fingers and the crimps. And I dare say you have planned half a dozen things to say at breakfast that shall be so un-premeditated, and so sensible and witty. Here, most exemplary young lady, confess to me."

She seated herself in her cousin's lap, took Hattie's face between her two hands, and, looking straight into her eyes, asked, — "Don't

you think Percy Willard is handsome? Now tell me the exact truth."

"I think he is fine looking."

"Well, that is what we mean when we call a gentleman handsome. Do n't you think he is talented, and good, and interesting?"

"Yes."

"And do n't you mean to make yourself agreeable to him?"

"I mean to make myself agreeable to everybody."

"But that is not a straightforward answer. You will try to be agreeable to Mrs. Seymour; but are you not conscious of a little more effort to please when you are with Mr. Willard? Do you not feel more gratified if he admires and enjoys you? Say, now, you would not take the same pains to look pretty and be attractive and interesting to please a poor old woman, that you would to please a handsome young man? The difference between you and me is just this. You

hide your intentions and feelings out of sight, and with an innocent, demure manner, lay yourself out to catch your unsuspecting victim, while I put on an open face, own up to my designs, and give him a fair chance to run away or fight back if he chooses. Now, Hattie, is it not so?"

"Mary, do n't talk nonsense. I never said I did not enjoy the society and attentions of young men; but you know, as well as I do, that there is a difference between frank friendliness and real mutual enjoyment among gentlemen and ladies, and the despicable selfishness, vanity and littleness which endeavors to attract attention, win admiration or excite interest and affection merely to gratify itself and exercise a certain kind of power."

"Do n't you think it is very pleasant to make people love you? Is it not desirable to acquire power over others? Should we not endeavor to exert a strong influence, to make deep impressions on others?"

"When you ask the general question, I should answer, in general, that we should seek to understand human nature, and know how to take it at best advantage for its own good. We should try to deserve love. We should endeavor to make the goodness and truth in us, strong in its influence on another, not to secure any personal power or admiration, but for its own sake. What we seek unselfishly in that respect is likely to be safe."

"Should not good girls, such as you and I, for instance, attract young men, that they may fall in love with the goodness in us, instead of being bewitched by silly, selfish girls?"

"Is goodness your abundant and all-powerful charm? In truth, I do believe that each girl should trust and honor all other girls more for having known her."

"Well, my model girl, how is she to go to work?"

"Not so much through what she does or says, as

through what she is, should he find himself lifted to a higher level through his intercourse with her. Is there any better way for her to preach purity and delicacy, refinement and honor, than by being pure and delicate, refined and honorable? Is there any better way for her to show a man how to be honest, brave and manly, than for herself to be truthful, fearless and brave-hearted? Such things, being a part of herself, will find a natural expression when called for."

"But all that is a different thing from fascinating a man. Some girls do that without any effort."

"As to that kind of influence, a sort of magnetic power, partly physical, which I suppose most of us have, though in far different degrees, I think it is rather a dangerous force to use, especially when exercised between ladies and gentlemen. I do n't know much about it, but it seems to me there is an element in it which is not ennobling to either party. There is often a great tempta-

tion to use it. When a girl sees that she holds a man under her slightest touch, she enjoys the exercise of her power; how can she help it? But any power exerted simply to prove its strength, is apt to be debasing; used as a means to a noble end, it becomes ennobled."

"I remember you wrote a composition about that last year. What was that quotation from Shakespeare?"

"It is excellent
To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant."

"Only very good people can be trusted with the exercise of that peculiar personal power. Those whom we call fascinating, have often some dark depths within, into which they are glad the sunshine does not come, though doubtless many exercise it unconsciously."

"You preach very well, Hattie, and practice pretty well too. But I don't pretend to be so good. I wish I was, and knew as much as you do. You talk like a book. But then, so much

wisdom might be too much for one family. So, since I am not such a grand specimen of a girl, you may finish your hair, and I will go to sleep and dream about a handsome young man, with deep, dark eyes and royal brow."

The two girls were talking in the "spare chamber" at Hemlocks. Hattie Lovell had been one of Daisy's valued friends at school. She was older than the other girls, and patronized Daisy somewhat in a sisterly way. She was a fine scholar, sensible and conscientious, and had a warm, generous heart. The cousin, Mary Morris, was entirely unlike her, but the two girls were much attached to each other. Hattie, from her three years seniority, often assumed the character of adviser and chaperon to the younger and more giddy girl, and Mary used to repay her by the most unmerciful teasing. But few persons had so much influence over her as her cousin Hattie.

The Morris family, and Hattie with them, were

boarding for the summer in a mountain town not far distant, and had come, at Daisy's invitation, to spend a week with her. This was the first night after their arrival, and they were indulging in the free, confidential talk so common to girls when they shut out the world, and, in dressing-gown and slippers, let down their hair and chat over the events of the day or the plans of the morrow.

Whether Mary proceeded with deliberate plan to lay siege to Percy Willard's heart and secure his attention, or only followed the promptings of a frank, unbridled impulse and genuine interest, she certainly succeeded in monopolizing a great deal of the young man's time and attention. The home party was frequently increased by other visitors, and young men from the village were very glad to join them in croquet, riding, driving and boating. And it very often happened that Percy Willard and Mary Morris were paired off together. Perhaps from inherent reserve or

shyness, which made it pleasanter to him to be drawn out than force himself into notice, to receive than to make advances ; perhaps from careless indolence or ease - loving heedlessness of consequences, he indulged in the present pleasure, perhaps from a thorough enjoyment of the freshness, originality and spirit of the impulsive but really good - hearted girl.—Whatever the reason, he certainly showed a much greater interest in Mary than in her more intelligent, womanly and unselfish cousin.

While Hattie and Daisy revived their former affectionate confidences, and talked over all that had befallen them during the year,—their intellectual attainments, their religious hopes and trials, and their plans for the future, with reminiscences of the past and inquiries and affectionate interest in all that concerned their school-mates,—their most serious talk brightened and seasoned with flashes of mirth, sportive conceits of fancy, airy thoughts and lively humor,—their

gayest mirth softened and refined by indwelling purity and deep, earnest purpose; — while they were thus enjoying and helping each other, Mary and Percy were measuring their wits in lively sparring, loitering about the piano with singing and sentimental nonsense, or stirring a witching flutter in each other's hearts by a half unconscious tenderness in an eye-glance or eloquent flushing of the cheek.

The visit passed pleasantly, and came to an end too soon. The girls were initiated into the mysteries of butter and cheese-making, learned the names of the cows as they were driven down from pasture, and ate lunch on the heaps of fragrant hay when Percy and Harry were among the hay-makers. They had climbed the hill-tops and explored the wooded valleys, been to picnics and on fishing excursions, and reveled in the delights of country freedom and country hospitality.

Before they left, a visit to the mountains was

planned, which should bring them together again. Mrs. Seymour had a sister living at North Conway, about a mile from the little village, and during a visit at Hemlocks the previous winter, she had exacted a promise that the family should come to see her the ensuing summer, and leave Daisy with her for several weeks. The party, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Seymour, Daisy and the two little boys, were to go as soon as the haying was finished, driving in the family carriage. Mr. and Mrs. Seymour and the children were to remain only a week, leaving Daisy with Mrs. Windsor, whose young married daughter and her husband were spending the summer with her, and would take Daisy under their protection for the various excursions among the mountains. Percy had made an engagement with a party of young men, most of them his college classmates, who were to make a walking tour through that region, and would fix their head-quarters at North Conway while their friends were there.

The plan was successfully carried out, and the visit full of enjoyment and incident. Daisy was unsophisticated enough to enjoy the novelty and variety of the social life there, with its freedom and rest and unconventionality, the tonic of the mountain air and the elixir of the out-door life; she had sense and humor enough to be amused at the affectations, and vanities, and apings of fashion, and ludicrous attempts at style, displayed by those who make a journey to the mountains in much the same way that they buy a new bonnet or parade on Broadway; and she had poetry, and sentiment, and devotion enough to be almost lifted out of herself in the fullness of her delight among those grand old mountains. She was peculiarly impressible to the influences of nature, and they spoke to her almost with the voice of divinity.

Nothing can give us so high a conception of everlasting strength, and of eternal, unshaken, self-centered, self-poised existence, as these

rock - ribbed, cloud - capped mountain ranges which have defied the storms and convulsions of ages. Whatever may have been the earth - throes through which their giant forms sprang into being, and reared their crested heads to battle unharmed with the forces of the sky, they stretch themselves on the bosom of the riven mother-earth, and forevermore rest undisturbed in their grand repose. We look at them and comprehend something of immovable foundations. We grow strong in endeavoring to grasp the broad base and bold, rocky sides in one steady view; the spirit itself springs into a higher region as the eye follows the lofty peaks and rocky summits outlined with delicate tracery on the blue heaven that stoops to meet them, or lost in clouds where they hide themselves with baffling suggestions of height beyond measure or vision.

The sea is glorious in its magnificent expanse and boundless depth. The heart swells at the wild roar of its seething waves, and moans with

uncomprehended pain at its undertone of sadness. We watch the wild surf rolling shoreward, tossing up a foamy crest, and how the spirit rises exultingly to meet it! We see the on-rushing swell of water, playing and frolicking in its mighty force, leaping up and catching the sunshine and tossing it back in a thousand diamonds, its myriad ripples and wavelets dancing and caressing each other, and then in an instant more the wind catches it and the white foam breaker tosses and tumbles and rolls in bounding chase after its fellows. We toss our arms in wild welcome at its approach; with winged feet we plunge into its embrace. Who remembers black waters rolling in sullen masses under a leaden sky, in the exultant, bounding delight of sunshine and favorable breezes?

But the sea is too much like ourselves. Its storms, and its sighs, and its play in the sunshine, are too human to help the heart grow strong and calm in endurance and faith. Its

unrest evermore stirs an unspoken want, an indefinite longing, within us. But by the mountains we climb up into the very presence of Jehovah. We feel that His throne is established forever and ever. With unutterable repose we rest in the conscious love and care of an unchangeable God.

"The invisible things . . . are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead."

As Daisy looked upon them in the early morning, with the golden sunlight crowning their summits, or when, the fading sunset clothing them in purple mists, they were ever calling to an act of solemn worship. And her heart responded,—“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”—“Which by his strength fastsetteth the mountains, being girded with power.” “As the mount-

ains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever." "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all people shall flow unto it."



CHAPTER XVIII.

USING EDGED TOOLS.

DURING the first week of the visit, Daisy saw but little of the Morris party, as they were boarding down at "The Three Elms," and Mrs. Windsor lived a mile from the village in the other direction. The pedestrian company had encamped about half way between them, and Percy oscillated from one to the other as circumstance or fancy led him. Soon after Mr. and Mrs. Seymour left, an arrangement was made which brought the girls together.

Mr. Morris and family were going to make a trip to Montreal, and as the weather was very

warm, Hattie and Mary preferred to remain at the mountain village, rather than endure the heat and dust and fatigue of traveling, and sight-seeing in a city. Mr. Morris did not like to leave them at the boarding house without a chaperon, and persuaded Mrs. Windsor to take them to board with her until their return from Montreal. This was very pleasant for the girls. Percy and his friends were attentive, and every day brought a new enjoyment or added a fresh zest to those already familiar. They made excursions to Diana's Baths, Echo Lake, The Cathedral, and other places of interest in the vicinity, walked and rode, played croquet or sat through hours of the dreamy summer afternoon on the shady piazza, with books or embroidery, in chatty sociability or delicious idleness, silence and reverie.

“A pleasing land of drowsy head it was;—
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
Forever flushing round a summer sky.”

These young people,—pausing in their work and throwing off the usual pressure of care and responsibility, as well as of future burdens, giving themselves up to rest and play, cutting adrift from yesterday and to-morrow, floating idly in the sunshine of to-day,—would sometimes drift into frivolity and nonsense, and seem to lose their higher and better selves in their butterfly life. But they were too sincere and earnest in their character, their aims and principles were too deeply rooted, to suffer them to float long on eddying currents, toying with the idle breezes, or entirely to lose sight of the port towards which they were steering. In the main, they made their vacation a refreshing rest and a healthful, invigorating recreation, relaxing from vigorous work long enough to brush the cobwebs from their brains, clear the sand from their eyes, wash away the stains of toil from their hands, put aside their worn and dust-covered garments, and clothe the spirit anew for labor and conflict.

Percy and Mary kept up their gay badinage and tacit appropriation of each other's society ; and since everybody had more than enough to enjoy, no one interfered or seemed to care. No one except Mrs. Windsor. She was disturbed a little by their interest in each other. She felt a little responsible for the doings of the young people while they were under her care, and thought it was quite unworthy of Percy to fritter his time and waste his thoughts in that foolish way, on a thoughtless girl like Mary Morris, especially as she had taken for granted that his affections were already centered on a more worthy object.

One day she said to Daisy : " Mr. Willard and Miss Morris seem to think a great deal of each other."

" Yes," said Daisy, simply, " they seem to enjoy each other. Mary is very entertaining. She is quite the life of our party."

" But it seems to me he is very particular in his attentions to her, and she appears to claim

him as if she had a right. I should not think she was the kind of girl that he would care for."

Daisy looked up inquiringly. Mrs. Windsor went on: "I don't think she would be very suitable for a minister's wife."

"A minister's wife!" exclaimed Daisy in amazement. "Who ever thought of that!"

"Well, somebody ought to think of it," said Mrs. Windsor, pointedly.

If Daisy thought about it, she did not show any disturbed feeling. Whether she felt satisfied that Mary Morris would make a good minister's wife, or was sure she would never have the opportunity of proving, or her own heart was still slumbering in unconscious ignorance of its desires and hopes, she betrayed no jealous solicitude.

The very next morning they went berrying, down through the wooded pastures to the shore of the lake, and Percy and Mary hurried on together "to have the first pick;" while the rest

scattered apart, loitering for any way-side attraction, till Daisy was left quite behind. When Percy came back to hunt her up, she had a merry reply to his half-bantering concern lest she were lost, and hurried on "so as not to keep him away from the rest;" and yet a close observer might have seen a shade of troubled thought on her face, as if she had missed something, she hardly knew what, and was puzzling herself to see how it had gone. But that bright morning was no time for the growth of any sickly sentiment. The blue-berries were scarce, but it was worth while to spend an hour among those low pines, breaking through the sweet ferns, brakes and wild-roses, the dew still heavy on them, with the odorous pine boughs sweeping across the face, and the sound of the rippling water breaking idly against the shore. A ramble in a wild, rough place gives a good tone to the mind, and it puts one in good spirits to find that one gets on tolerably in a rough, hard place. As the

foot clings to a rock, springs over a chasm or a stretch of swampy moss, climbing, leaping or swinging down on the shrubs or branches with steady head and strong muscle, one feels more sure that there is something tough and strong and well-balanced in one's self.

But if Daisy's equanimity was undisturbed, Mary grew unequal in her spirits;—now gay and now sober, and often speaking impatiently as if fretted and dissatisfied.

"What is the matter, Mary?" said Hattie, one day, as the former tossed her gloves spitefully across the room and jerked her hat till she broke the elastic.

"Oh, nothing. Only I feel cross."

"But what makes you feel cross?"

"Do you know Samson's riddle,—'Out of the strong came forth sweetness?' I have been trying to solve it, and it is a tough thing. One can be either strong or sweet, but sweetness out of strength;—that's the problem."

"You speak in riddles, truly. What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing. I wish you would not bother me."

The next morning Mary and Percy were sitting on the piazza when Henry Morton rode up, leading a lady's saddle horse, and Daisy came out in her riding habit. Henry Morton was the young lawyer who used to visit Harry so much at Hemlocks, during the winter.

"You are going to ride, Daisy?" said Percy, springing up.

Yes; is it not a fine morning for a good gallop?"

"Pleasant morning enough; but it seems to me you are enjoying it all by yourselves. Could n't the rest of us have a share?"

"Yes, if we had thought of it," answered Morton. "My sister is going, and a few others down there, and I persuaded Miss Seymour to join us for once. You belong to each other so

exclusively here, that it is not often any of us lesser divinities can lure away a goddess."

"Better come up to Olympus and share with the gods, than tempt them away to the haunts of men," said Percy. "But are you sure this horse is safe? He has a wicked eye."

"The horse is all right; sure-footed and easily managed, though a little restive just now."

Percy walked around, examined the girths and adjusted the saddle, while Daisy was buttoning her gauntlets, and then, paying no attention to Morton as he was waiting there, assisted her to mount, and arranged her skirt with a quiet assurance that made the young lawyer bite his lip.

He looked after them steadily as they rode away, and then walked back to his seat with an absent look on his face.

"Daisy's habit is very becoming to her," said Mary. "How pretty she is, and how

well she rides," she added, as he made no reply.

They watched the riders till the horses quickened their pace and disappeared around a curve in the road.

"I don't like the looks of that horse," said Percy, "and Daisy is not much used to the saddle. I hope nothing will happen to them."

Mary remembered that she rode that same horse with John Wellman only the other day, and Percy had no concern about it. "It does not matter if I break my neck," she thought, with a little twinge of pain.

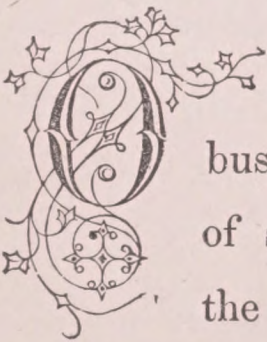
Percy was restless and uneasy until he saw Morton and Daisy slowly cantering up the road; whether it was the horse, or Morton, that worried him, Mary did not know. When they rode up to the door, Daisy was very sober, and Morton's face was pale. He stood quietly by the horse's head while Percy lifted her from the saddle. The ride seemed to have fatigued

her, for she did not make her appearance again until dinner. Morton left town the next day. If Percy had any suspicion what he and Daisy had said to each other that morning, he never betrayed it, and Daisy never offered any explanation when Harry used to wonder afterwards why Mr. Morton did not come to Hemlocks any more.



CHAPTER XIX.

SELF - REVELATIONS.

NE morning Mary was very busy finishing some little sketches of scenery that she had made during the week. She was not apt to be industrious, but some of those beautiful elms that dot the green meadows had so delighted her eye that she could not resist copying them, and here and there a bit of scenery had haunted her till she had reproduced it in tangible form. She did not care much for the birch bark treasures, mosses, minerals, and such mementos as many of the visitors prized, but these little pictures

embodied all her sentiments and poetry. Percy came in and inquired for Daisy. She had gone out with Mrs. Windsor to see a sick old lady. He was sorry ; he " wanted to consult her."

" Won't I do ? " said Mary, saucily. " I can advise about the tie of your cravat, or the color of your gloves, or the most graceful way of lounging in your chair ; which is it ? "

" As it does not happen to be either of those important subjects, I must wait for Daisy ; " and he seated himself on the other side of the table and looked over her sketches. They were most of them simple studies and roughly finished, but were really very fine, and he was surprised to see the talent displayed.

" I had no idea you were so much of an artist. How does it happen ? "

" It did not happen ; it grew, " she answered him, but she said to herself, " I believe he thinks it is a wonder if I can do anything ; and I am afraid this is the only thing I can do well ; and

this is no credit to me, for it costs no effort." She went on with her work, thinking bitter thoughts,— "Percy amuses himself with me, because I am simply amusing. He never sits down to a quiet, sensible talk with me, because he don't find anything in me to answer it. I am just a rattle-pated girl,—nothing more. I remember Mrs. Lawrence once said, we could tell a person's estimate of us by the conversation they addressed to us. Percy Willard thinks I am a lively, entertaining, good-hearted fool. And I have never given him any reason to think otherwise." She worked away vigorously, shading a granite boulder, and gnarled trunk of a dead tree twisted over it. "But he has never tried to lift me to a higher level. He has stooped to meet me on this ground. It is his fault as much as mine, that we have only played together; at least he might have helped it." Her self-condemnation was not morbid; she was ready to be just to herself, even by blaming another.

Percy was making scrolls and borders on the margins of her pictures, rallying her occasionally on her unusual silence and diligence. After a while Hattie came in, and Mary gathered up her drawings and went to her room. She first put away very carefully the pictures upon which Percy had left his pencil marks, and then sat down by the window and thought; — thought seriously for a long time. Out of that serious thought a noble conception of womanhood dawned in her mind, with a bitter regret that she had lost so many of its possibilities through her own carelessness and blindness, and an incipient purpose to redeem what was left by earnest, patient effort.

The young men had been away several days on a tramp to Jackson Falls, and returned late one evening. Mary came down unusually early the next morning, and as she opened the parlor door, she saw, through the open window, Percy and Daisy standing on the piazza in earnest talk or

eloquent silence, she could hardly tell which. They were looking up to the mountains, and their thoughts seemed to have gone quite away from themselves, up beyond the visible into the invisible. Mary stood a moment spell-bound. She thought: "Percy Willard never looked at me with a face like that. I put his manhood to sleep and belittle his soul into frivolity. There was not enough in me to take his measure. I never saw his full height before. And Daisy stands there with comprehension and full sympathy with his best thoughts." For a single moment she hated Daisy. Turning suddenly, she hurried out at a side door, down the garden path, trailing her dress over the grassy border as she paced rapidly up and down the walk.

Half an hour later she came into the breakfast-room, just as they were sitting down to the table. Daisy had brought Percy in to breakfast with them. Mary had in her hand a cluster of rose-buds; she came around to Daisy and fastened

them in her hair, then bent down and kissed her with a tender, beseeching look, as if she were asking her pardon for something.

"What is it, Mary?" said Daisy.

"Only a good morning with the dew on it," said she, lightly.

"I should think it was 'a good morning with the dew on it,'" said Hattie. "See your dress, Mary. Where have you been?"

"Only in the garden."

"And what could have sent you into the garden at this unseasonable hour?" asked Percy. "Are you taking to poetry and romance, and 'brushing the morning dew,' like other sentimental young ladies?"

"I went there to bury a demon," she answered, gravely.

"Bury a demon! And where did you find a demon in this mountain paradise?"

"I found it in the parlor when I came down this morning."

"Not alive, I hope?"

"Very much alive, I assure you."

"And you killed it and buried it?"

"I buried it. I am not sure how dead it was."

"You frighten me. How do I know but, the next time I take a leisurely stroll down the garden path, with all my armor unjointed, this same half-murdered demon will struggle up from his living grave and spring upon me with deadly clutch?"

Mary looked steadily into his face and said, slowly, — "If I grappled with the evil thing in its full-blooded strength, and conquered it too, you are a coward if you are afraid of its ghost."

"I will brace myself up to any fighting after such an insinuation. Must I quarrel with you to prove my mettle?"

"If you find me a spirit of evil."

"How you talk this morning, Mary. I should think you had been doing something desperate," interrupted Hattie; and she turned the conversa-

tion to their plans for the day. Percy said to himself: "There is more in that girl than I gave her credit for. I wonder what she meant." And then he dismissed it from his thought.

The next morning they went to the village, three miles distant, to spend the day with some friends boarding there. After dinner they went down into a flour mill near by, "to improve their minds and gain useful knowledge," as Mary said. Having satisfied their curiosity by following the process of grinding through its details, and powdered themselves with flour, they rambled up and down the mill stream. Across the bridge it widened into a sluggish basin, with broken trees and black stumps projecting above the surface, and apparently making it impassible for boats. Several little boats, moored just under the bridge, attracted their attention, and they were surprised to learn that this unpicturesque stream was the outlet of a lovely little lake hidden in the forests a mile or so above; and, moreover, that the

white pond - lilies were blossoming in great abundance around its shores. They decided at once to make an excursion into this primeval wilderness, and enrich themselves with the bounty of the waters, — if not with fish, at least with flowers.

After tea, they started off in two boats, which were skillfully piloted between the stumps, around the rocks and through the hidden obstructions in the channel; and just when they seemed pushing at random through an inundated swamp, the boats floated suddenly out into a smooth, deep lake, whose wooded shores sloped down from the embosoming hills, the unbroken forests climbing to their summits and stretching on in every direction. The surface of the water was unruffled save by a few ripples where a breath of air touched it for a moment, or an insect dimpled it with its gossamer wings. A delicate flush from the rose-colored clouds tinted the surface like the mantling blush on a maiden's cheek, and all along the opposite shore, the green lily pads and white lilies

with their golden hearts floated peacefully on the water, rooted in safe anchorage far below.

A shout went up from the boats as the beautiful scene burst suddenly upon them. They rested a few moments on their oars to enjoy the unexpected sight, and then pushed across to gather the abundant blossoms.

What frolics they had pulling at the long stems, two or three hands reaching after the same lily, tossing the dripping flowers into the boat, or sending a shower of drops into each other's faces, singing and laughing and chatting, or relapsing into a reverent hush as the silence and solitude of the scene brooded over them.

The fading light admonished them to tear themselves away from the enchanting spot. Loitering to gather a few more lilies, one boat was already on its way and the other slowly turning, when Daisy reached out after "such a lovely lily." The vigorous oar-stroke sent the boat ahead with a sudden leap through the water, and



In the flash of an eye Daisy was down among the lilies. Page 237.



the lily stem held fast to its root. In the flash of an eye Daisy was down among the lilies, and the boat more than double its length distant from her.

The screams of the girls, the quick whirl of the boat, the sharp word of command, the plashing in the water, made such a scene of fright, confusion and danger that their senses were half dazed, so they could hardly tell how it was that Percy and Daisy came to be sitting in the bottom of the boat, their garments dripping with water, and their hair clinging heavy around their pale faces. They knew that Percy had been in the other boat, and that Daisy's scream had brought him first to her help, and made him quickest and strongest in the rescue.

As it frequently happens in the reaction after a sudden fright, the first moments of utter thankfulness and assurance of safety are followed by a light gayety, and the tongue dwells laughingly on the details of the dangerous occurrence. So

with them; after the first shock was over, the laugh and chatter and song awoke the echoes with re-doubled sound. But though their spirits seemed unchecked, they did not mock at danger nor laugh at deliverance. As the shadows gathered among the hills, and the sunset light faded from the water, they wound through the tortuous channel with subdued voices and a hush in their hearts, as if solemnly remembering that, even on the "lilied pond," life and death lie close to each other.

As the evening was already growing dark and damp when they stepped ashore, and Daisy had been sitting so long in her wet clothing, the ladies would not allow her to run any farther risk by an evening ride, even after putting on dry garments, and insisted that she should remain with them until the next day; so she and Hattie spent the night there. With thoughtful care they took every precaution to guard against any serious consequences from the accident, and, though it was

several days before she recovered from the shock, she suffered no ill effects.

During the ride home that evening, Percy was silent and self-absorbed. In vain Mary rallied him for wrapping himself in his own thoughts. To all her lively chatter, he answered in an absent-minded manner. Now Mary was really a kind-hearted girl, and did not mean to hurt another's feelings nor shock the sensibilities; but, with her careless, mischief-loving spirit, she did not exercise a quick perception, ready tact and unselfish consideration of another's mood or feeling. She did not mean to indulge in cruel levity or heartlessness; but sometimes her sport was quite out of place. Her sense of the ludicrous was so keen, it was so easy for her to hold up anything in its comical aspect, that she was apt to indulge her propensities at the expense of those about her. She had such a merry way of being naughty, and her mirth so often verged on naughtiness, that those who loved her laughed

while they reproved her, and scolded while they laughed. But sometimes she ventured too far. To-night, mischievous imps danced in her eyes and threw a comical light on the grim, silent, abstracted figure by her side, and the light, teasing words slipped off her tongue so easily, that she did not realize how harshly her nonsense grated on his serious mood. At last she began to tease him on his knightly adventure in rescuing a fair lady from imminent peril.

"Oh, do n't!" he interrupted, with a shudder.

"Why, I suppose there was no real danger," she said, "in such a little pond, and we were not far from the shore, to say nothing of the half dozen valiant men ready to rush to the rescue."

"But it is dreadful to think of what might have happened."

"If Daisy had been lost" —

"There would n't have been anything left," he interrupted almost savagely.

Mary was not so obtuse but that she drew the

logical conclusion, that, if one object filled the eye so as to hide the rest of the world, it was because that object was so close that it covered the whole field of vision. She too relapsed into silence.

The next few days passed very quietly. The weather was rainy, and the girls busied themselves with their fancy-work, or in arranging and packing their collections of curiosities and souvenirs. Mary applied herself diligently to her drawing. She had suddenly grown enthusiastic and industrious in making pictures. When Percy came in and found them occupied, he would take a book and amuse himself, or read aloud to them.

It would not be easy to describe the change which had come over Percy and Mary. Perhaps they were not fully conscious of it themselves, and a careless observer would not have noticed it. But Mrs. Windsor was an interested observer, and she "put it down in her mind that Percy

had come to himself, and Miss Morris had found that it was of no use." What was of no use, she did not state to herself.

Percy and Mary did not make any allusions or explanations. One day he took up one of her pictures, as she sat drawing. It was a little sketch of a clump of elms under which they had one day spent the afternoon. Daisy and Hattie had brought out their portfolios, and wrote letters while she and Percy talked or sang snatches of songs. When they were ready to go back to tea, she had kept them waiting while she walked off a short distance and sketched the trees, and Percy, Daisy and Hattie, just as they were grouped, waiting impatiently for her. She had finished up the rough sketch with unusual care.

"You are left out, Mary," said he. "Can't you put yourself in with us? there is room on this side, and then the picture will be complete."

"But it would not be true. It is better as it is," she said, without looking up from her work.

He looked at the picture a long time, and sat silent, quite absorbed in his own thoughts. After a while he took up a piece of paper and wrote absently, as if, while playing with the pencil, his thought had expressed itself unintentionally. When Mary gathered up her pictures after he had gone, she took up the paper and read: "A man carries within him the germ of his most exceptional actions; and if we wise people make eminent fools of ourselves sometimes, we must endure the conclusion that we carry a few grains of folly." She bit her lip, remembering how she had enjoyed that afternoon. Whether or not he intended the scrap of writing for her eye, she put it away with the picture.

Probably Percy Willard never suspected the genuine interest awakened in the heart of the merry girl, never dreamed of the resolution with which she smothered the pain, the good sense which learned wisdom from her mistakes and heedlessness, nor the healthy temper which

blamed her own folly without bitterness or weak self-pity.

Their summer play-day came to an end with the end of the month. Mr. and Mrs. Morris had extended their tour to Ottawa, leaving the girls three weeks at Mrs. Windsor's. Then Mary and Hattie joined them at the Glen House. Harry came to go with Daisy to Mt. Washington, and Percy and his party followed them in that direction. They met again at the Glen House, and made the excursion to the top of Mt. Washington in company; then they separated, Mr. Morris and family to return by way of Gorham and Portland, the pedestrians to extend their trip around the Franconia mountains, and Harry and Daisy back to Conway and then home.

When Mary Morris returned to school, she took up her studies with unusual diligence. She did not change suddenly into a model scholar. It is not so easy to break up old habits, but she made more improvement than during both the

previous years. The mischief-loving girls missed something of her old careless frolicking, and no one found her so imperturbably good-natured as she used to be. When we set ourselves steadily to accomplish a task, or overcome faults and discipline ourselves, we meet obstacles, make failures, and suffer mortifications and disappointments which chafe the temper and curb the spirits, much more than when we float idly down the current careless of the direction. Besides, Mary's good resolutions and efforts were founded only in her own good sense and natural conscience. There was no gracious sweetness of comfort and strength from above. The year was profitable, but not a very happy one to her. Just before she left school, she became a Christian, and then her character and life became an illustration of the marvelous power of God's grace to sanctify the natural dispositions, so that even the traits which had been her greatest trials and defects, developed into Christian virtues, though

bearing the unmistakable stamp of her own individuality. God finds a use for whatever He endows us with. He sets some lives in the sunshine and some in the shade, some on the hill-side and some in the valley. The tough fiber breasts the storm, the sensitive plant seeks shelter from it. God made them both. Let souls, royal in strength and lofty courage and patient endurance and undying hope, thank God and tenderly care for the despairing, fainting ones who sink helpless under the first trial.

In a year after Mary left school, her father failed, and the family were reduced from affluence to a condition almost penniless. Mr. Morris's health and reason were shattered by the blow. He became a helpless child, to be guarded and cared for with watchful solicitude. Then Mary roused herself with energy, courage and hope, and turned her one talent, as she called it, to good account. Through many domestic trials and much discouragement, she worked and waited till

she achieved comparative success and became almost the dependence of the family. At first, she hired a room, and, through the influence of former friends, secured a few pupils in drawing. The number of her pupils increased slowly, till she had a profitable class in various departments of her art. Meanwhile she had devoted all her spare time to practice, and finally ventured to offer some little pictures for sale. To her surprise, she found a ready market for them.

In two or three years she had worked her way through difficulties, with heroic courage, perseverance, and cheerful faith, and established herself in her profession with a fair income. As the sale of her pictures became more profitable, she gave up her classes and devoted herself to her art.

Who knows the burden of home care that she carried, — the dull pain that lurked under her cheerfulness, — the dreariness of solitary and unsuccessful work, — the longing of youthful hopes

and dreams,—the pressure of pecuniary anxieties, — the struggles to save those she loved from suffering? Who shall open the pages that she kept sealed? Who shall unfasten the clasp that shut in the story of her inner life?

The bright face, with its short clustering curls and laughing eyes that gladdened many a heart as she came and went in her daily walks to her studio, told no tales of shadows resting on her heart. Brave, strong, true heart, —

“ Keeping, with many a light disguise,
The secret of self-sacrifice,”—

God knew it all.

Late, but not too late, came the release from home anxieties and burdens, when the younger members of the family could lift the care from her shoulders, and she could look with answering love into the face of a true man whose rich nature grew purer and sweeter, through the royal womanhood of his beloved wife.



CHAPTER XX.

FINAL VIEWS.

TIME hurries on. Four years had passed since Daisy came to Hemlocks ; years full of interest and incident to her, through which she had been sowing the seeds or developing the germs of much that future years realized. These had been years of growth. Her whole nature had grown larger, stronger, richer, sweeter, and her face, figure and motions interpreted with a clearer distinctness the spirit which breathed through them. She had not yet attained the completeness of womanhood ; — that comes only with the larger life and riper experience of years ; but her present character was full

of promise for the future. She suggested Wordsworth's beautiful Portrait :

“She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament.
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From may - time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle and waylay.

“I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman, too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright and good
For human nature's daily food, —
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles.

“And now I see, with eye serene,
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveler betwixt life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill.

A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light."

It would be far from the truth to say that Daisy Seymour realized this description. Perfection is of slow growth, and hardly reaches maturity during the life-time of human nature. Sin and weakness, ignorance and blindness dwarf and distort the fairest growth. Only the grace of God in our hearts can infuse vitality and strength into our aspirations and efforts, and so, bringing us nearer to Him, make us approximate to excellence and completeness. However earnest our endeavor to harmonize our motive and will, passion and affection, into sweet concord with the highest law of our being, "the sad music of humanity" echoes a mournful refrain, or its harsh tones strike discordant into the sweetest melody. To grow in grace and in the knowledge of God our Saviour, is the secret of all true growth, the basis of genuine culture and real progress. Then

the whole being lifts itself, and moves on towards the infinite.

The first year at her father's had been the most striking in its influence upon Daisy. She was at that impressible transition period when thoughtless, impulsive girlhood stands on the threshold of real life, with its trials, temptations, hopes and possibilities. The change in her circumstances, the death of loved ones, the new duties devolving on her, the new friends whom she learned to love, the necessity for exertion, self-reliance, and energy and firmness of purpose, had balanced her character in a calmer self-poise, and strengthened it into greater force than her natural disposition would have developed.

The next two years were not so eventful. She taught music and French at the Academy during the Spring and Fall terms, spent the winter quietly at home, taking her play-time in the summer when there was frequently a succession of visitors at Hemlocks; or she would take a

short journey, or visit among friends. The last year had been rich in enjoyment and full of opportunities for culture. Through Mrs. Lawrence's thoughtful interest, she had received an offer to go to Europe, nominally as governess in a family who were to spend the year abroad, but really as companion and friend. The two young ladies had left school, but intended to continue their studies in some departments, and Daisy's work would be to encourage, sympathize and study with them, rather than instruct them. Their mother was quite an invalid, and would value Daisy's society for her own sake, and Daisy could relieve her of many cares and responsibilities which her ill health made a burden to her. They were to spend the winter at Dresden, but, during the fall and spring, would travel through France, Switzerland and Italy.

When Daisy received this proposal, Lucy, with her little girl, had come home to spend several months, while her husband was in San Francisco

superintending some business affairs, and settling his plans in reference to removing his family there, should his enterprise prove successful. Daisy was not needed at home, and there seemed no reason why she should not avail herself of such an opportunity.

The year had been very pleasant, realizing her most sanguine anticipations, opening a thousand new avenues of pleasure, and affording ample means for cultivating her taste, broadening her views and enlarging her knowledge. Their party met with the annoyances, delays and perplexities common to travelers, and were sometimes disappointed, sometimes looked longingly back to their own American homes and the friends left behind; they realized no exception to the ordinary experience of humanity; but their plans were generally successful, and their enjoyment had as few drawbacks as could be expected. Daisy so endeared herself to the family that her place with them was that of an honored, trusted, loved daughter.

Now she reaped the benefit of her faithful study and writing during Percy Willard's tour abroad. She was prepared to appreciate and enjoy scenes and objects with which she had become familiar through these means, and was much better fitted to make herself valuable and enjoyable in her relation to her pupils. Now it was her turn to write to Percy. How he counted on her letters! How promptly they came! How they brightened up his little room and warmed his heart! A dear face looking out from the pages of metaphysics, a warm human love glowing through abstract truths and doctrinal discussions, inspires and vitalizes even brain power.

Daisy had been home more than a month. Percy had graduated from the theological seminary a short time before, and was making a brief visit at Hemlocks. His talent had secured him a high rank in his class, and, during the last six months he had preached frequently, earning a reputation for unusual pulpit ability. He still

looked forward with some distrust and trembling towards the work before him. The intellectual labor he did not shrink from, but he had a high conception of the office of the ministry, and was often weighed down with a sense of his weakness and unworthiness to put his hand to the ark of God.

Percy and Daisy were walking home from the late afternoon service at the village church. They were talking as a young man and maiden talk together, who are very dear to each other, who have chosen each other out of all the world, and who look out into the future with eyes radiant with the light of love, and hearts united in common hopes and interests. They had been talking of that future. Percy had received calls from two churches ; one was a large church in a neighboring city, the other was in a flourishing village, the parish including the surrounding farming district.

"On many accounts," he said, "I should pre-

fer the city. There is a wide field of usefulness in such a position, and a much greater stimulus to effort. The pressure from without would continually compel me to new exertions, and the strongest motives and warmest sensibilities rouse me into nobler action. On the other hand, my youth and inexperience unfit me for such a responsibility. I am only twenty-five years old. It seems to me I have no right to assume such solemn duties, and take such a charge, until I have proved myself a little. To write sermons is only a part of my work. A pastor so often needs mature judgment, knowledge of human nature, and that practical wisdom and those comprehensive and warm sympathies which come only through the experience of life, that I fear my ignorance and crudity and indiscretion would make disastrous mistakes. I think I am quite willing to undertake hard labor, endure criticism and mortification, and throw myself without reserve into my work; but I have no right to risk

my Master's interest and honor in my inexperienced, rash hands. I might not only tax the patience and forbearance of my people, but bring reproach upon the cause I loved."

"But we have the promise, — 'as thy day is, so shall thy strength be.'"

"But God expects us to exercise the faculties which He has given us, and He works through natural means, hiding Himself behind the laws of our mental and spiritual nature, as well as in the laws of matter. If a child rashly attempts to do a man's work, He does not endow him with a man's strength. In the duty that He appoints us, the work that He calls us to do without our choosing, He strengthens the weak heart with the assurance, — "my grace is sufficient for thee." When He imposes labor and responsibility upon us, He gives grace to the willing, trusting heart, and at all times gives to him that asketh; but He often leaves us to make choices when we must measure ourselves by the work.

"Would not the country church also demand experience and knowledge, and bring responsibility?"

"Not in so great a degree. The burden of so many souls would not rest on me; so many interests would not require my attention and action; the whirl and rush of currents of humanity, sweeping through the streets, would not force their manifold claims upon my bewildered eyes, and goad and sting my feelings into morbid sensibility and impetuous action. I must have time to balance myself in my new position; I must take some less conspicuous place, learn how to meet the wants of a people, and how to use myself most effectually in the great work of saving souls."

"But is there no danger of stagnation in the country, where there is less intellectual stimulus, and less necessity for vigorous effort?"

"Perhaps. But we should not confound a slow, healthy growth with stagnation, neither a

hot-bed forcing into fruitage with a natural maturity."

"Then it seems to me that you have already decided the question in favor of the country church."

"No, Daisy; not decided. My ambition and taste look one way, my judgment, and possibly my conscience, another. I waited to consult you, thinking your eyes might see more impartially."

Daisy was silent, and after a pause he went on, looking wistfully at her. "I thought perhaps you would prefer the city; that I ought not to hide you in a country parsonage, — you who might be a queen anywhere."

Daisy started a little, conscious that such a thought had glanced through her mind, almost hidden in the fond pride which made her unwilling that Percy should waste his talent in a country pulpit. His remark made her ashamed that she should have had such a thought of herself, or such an estimate of the use and waste of tal-

ent. She looked up archly. "So you thought you would be good, choose humbly and conscientiously, and then let me be the excuse for gratifying your own desire. You would not pluck the forbidden fruit yourself, but you would eat it fast enough if I gave it to you. Now, Percy, are you not ashamed of yourself, to use me for a scape-goat?"

"Daisy, you know that it would be hard for me to see you suffer, when I could bear it patiently myself."

"Yes, I do know it; but you must let me share the suffering as well as the joy. Am I to be your help-meet through life by tempting your love to choose, for my sake, that which you think wrong or unworthy of yourself?"

"But I have a right to think of you and choose for your sake."

"Don't let us hide under a mean, selfish subterfuge which wears the name of affection. Did you never hear a man, who never thinks of con-

sulting his wife's taste, excuse himself for this or that indulgence, that 'she' liked it, or he did it to please 'her'? Or a woman, who always has her own way, cloak her selfishness or indolence under the plea, — 'my husband will not let me do that'? or, 'my husband insisted that I should have this'? Now I protest, in the beginning, against any such sham, or such real yielding of principle or indulgence of self. I am not half as good as I ought to be, I know, and perhaps shall not always strengthen you in the right; but I charge you now that you never yield to me when you feel that I am wrong, and never do for my sake what you would not otherwise think right."

"Then I hope you will never tempt me, Daisy. It would be very hard to resist you, especially as I have full as much confidence in your conscience as in my own. But if there was no question of duty, you would prefer the city?"

She did not answer. It was true that she would prefer the city, and for some good reasons, too.

At that moment they came upon little Nellie's grave. Mrs. Seymour had desired to have her buried; "just for the present," on their own farm. The Seymour lot was in a cemetery nearly three miles distant, and she wanted her darling's grave where she could sometimes visit it. A simple slab, with the inscription, "Our Nellie," marked the spot. The grass was smooth and green over the grave; a little weeping willow swept down its swaying fringes of green leaves over the foot; fresh flowers filled the little vases sunk in the turf. It was four years since Nellie died; but her name was kept in sweet remembrance. The grass in the little foot-path leading to the grave was well trodden with frequent footsteps, and from early spring to the winter snows, fresh flowers spoke with beautiful significance of the loving hands that thus expressed the heart's tender memories. This work of love was especially claimed by Dick and Robbie. Their mother had encouraged them in it, that the memory of their little

sister might not fade from their childish thoughts, and that the little one who had gone up to be an angel, might be a link to connect the visible with the invisible, and give her something real and human upon which to fasten her conceptions of heaven and angels and God.

Crossing the fields from the public road, they came suddenly upon the spot. They stopped sometime in silence, each going back in thought to the summer of her death, — the summer when they first met each other; each looking away from themselves and their future plans and hopes, up into that world where Nellie had gone, where "their angels do always behold the face of my Father."

"And a little child shall lead them." It was as if a little rift had opened in the sky, and they had seen for a moment the faces of the angels, or their ears had caught faint echoes of the songs of the redeemed, and out of the distance sounded a voice of infinite love and grace, answering back

to their ascriptions of praise,—“unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” “I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience and thy works.” “And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.”

After a long silence, Daisy opened her little hymn-book and softly read :

“Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shalt be;
Perish every fond ambition,
All I’ve sought, or hoped, or known;
Yet how rich is my condition!
God and heaven are still my own.”

Percy took the book, and, turning over the leaves, read in answer :

“Know, my soul, thy full salvation;
Rise o’er sin, and fear, and care;
Joy to find, in every station,
Something still to do or bear.
Think what spirit dwells within thee;
Think what Father’s smiles are thine;
Think that Jesus died to win thee;
Child of heaven, canst thou repine?

“Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith and winged by prayer;
Heaven’s eternal day’s before thee;
God’s own hand shall guide thee there
Soon shall close thy earthly mission;
Soon shall pass thy pilgrim days;
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise.”

“I think,” said Daisy, as they turned homewards, “if God will let us work for Him, the lowest place where we could do service would be a consecrated temple, the most humble labor become glorified into an act of worship. There is no great nor little, no high nor low; anything done for Him is a royal honor to the doer. Human distinctions fade into nothingness; the cup of cold water to the least of the disciples, and the valiant blow for the cause of truth; patient suffering, silent self-denial, and heroic effort that wins the world’s applause;—oh, if we could see all these things as God sees them, how often should we feel that the least becomes greatest! How glad we should be to do something for

Him, if He would only use us even in the humblest service ! ”

“ Service inspired by love outruns all the requirements of duty. The nearer we live to God, the warmer and more faithful our love, the less conflicting are our questions of duty. The Spirit abiding in us, His cause dearer than all other interests, our perception and motive and choice lie high above the influence of pride, ambition, selfishness, or any other worldly consideration.”

“ It is related of the celebrated Morgagne, that he once let fall his scalpel in the midst of a dissection and exclaimed,—‘ Oh, if I could only love God as well as I know Him ! ’ It is so strange that we do not love Him with an all-absorbing love that is constantly seeking opportunity for expression, instead of going reluctantly to do His will from a cold sense of obligation. How shall we keep such a love burning in our hearts ? ”

“ Perhaps by kindling our affections and feed-

ing the fire with a continual remembrance of His love to us. When I think that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish but have everlasting life,' I realize, so overwhelmingly, the danger of perishing human beings, and get such a glimpse of God's infinite love to us, that my heart does burn within me. I long to go to work for such a loving Master."

"And if we could realize more vividly the worth of spiritual things, carry in our thoughts an abiding and intense view of the other life, of which this is the beginning, hold a more intense belief in the heaven to which we are looking, I think the mists would be cleared from our eyes, and our sluggish affections and selfish wills would be so infused with the spirit and purified in the atmosphere of that heavenly land, that even here we should begin to see Jesus as He is, be like Him, and draw spiritually nearer to the time when we shall be satisfied because awaking in His likeness."

They had reached home. Standing a few moments at the door, looking towards the west, where the rosy flush was growing faint on the clouds, and the sunset colors were fading into twilight, Percy reverently answered: "The holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God; Having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his

servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever."

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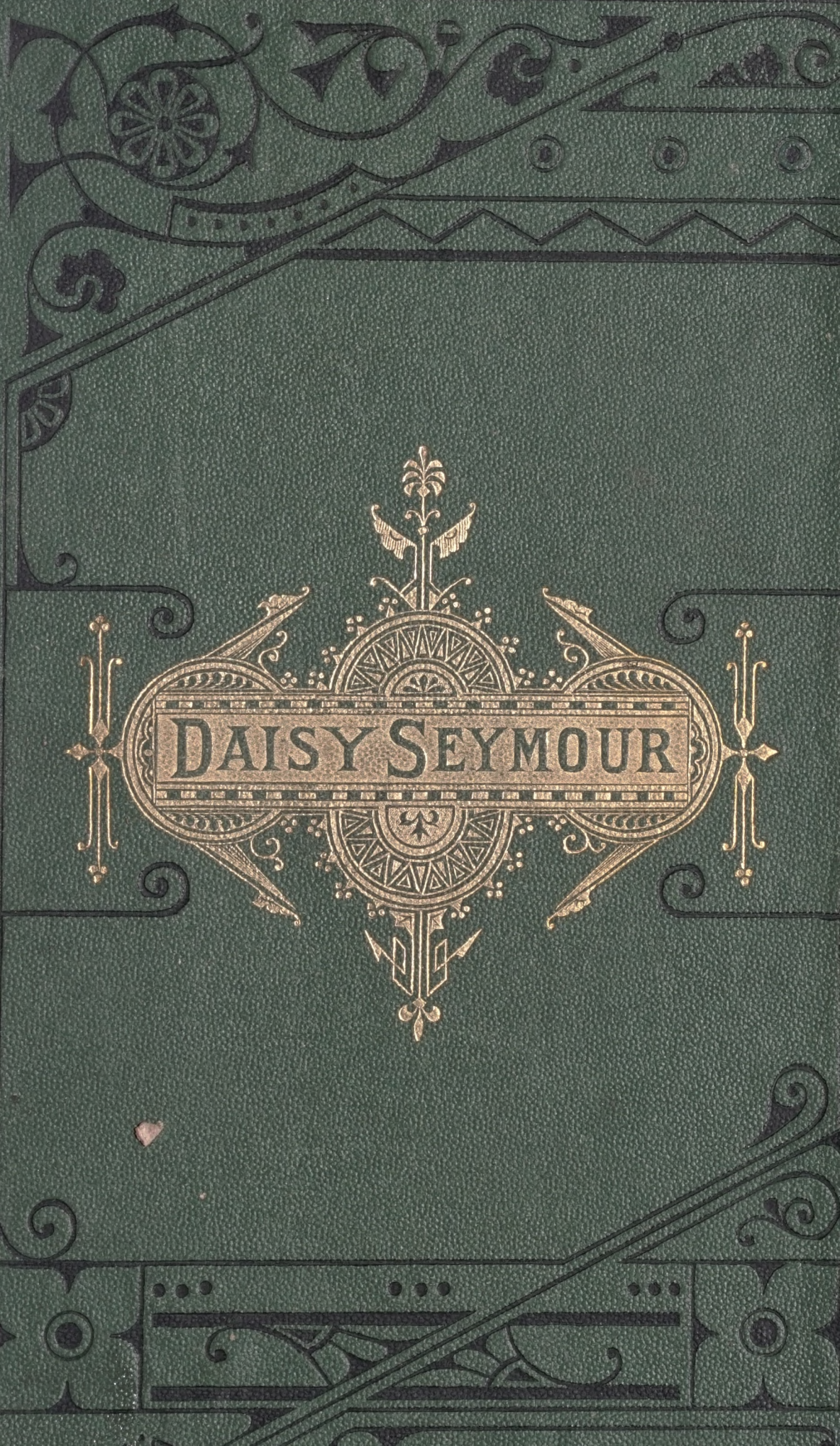
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